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Yaureybo Jordán Salivia
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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DIRECTING *ATREUS*:
RE-ENVISIONING CLASSIC GREEK THEATRE

by
YAUREYBO JORDÁN SALIVIA

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF FINE ARTS
IN
THEATRE ARTS

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ABSTRACT

Jordán Salivia, Yaureybo, M.F.A. Directing *Atreus*: Re-envisioning Classic Greek Theatre. Mankato: Minnesota State University, Mankato, 2021.

This document is a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre. It is detailed account of author Yaureybo Jordán's artistic process in directing Minnesota State University, Mankato's production of *Atreus* in the Spring of 2021. The thesis chronicles the director's artistic process from pre-production through performance in five chapters: a preproduction analysis, an historical and critical perspective, a rehearsal and performance journal, a post-production analysis and a process development analysis. Appendices and works referenced are included.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the early production analysis for *Atreus*, a play I wrote in 2017. The play was supposed to be staged on November 11-15, 2020 but due to COVID, it will not be stage on January 20-24, 2021 in the Andreas Theatre at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The performances will be Thursday to Saturday at 7:30pm and Saturday at 2:00pm. The production team will be Yaureybo Jordán as the Director, Heather Hamilton as the Directing Advisor, George Grubb as the Technical Advisor, Reina Beisell as the Production Stage Manager, Sam Verdick as the Assistant Stage Manager, Scott Anderson as the Scenic Designer, Morgan Benson as the Costume Designer, Jameson Bernhagen as the Light Designer, Jason Wagaman as the Sound Designer, and Joshua Zietse as the Technical Director.

The play is a contemporary take on the Classical Greek tragedy about the life of Atreus. This mythic tale reveals the tragic pattern of the family curse from which Atreus tries to escape but, by fate and the will of the gods, misery always pursues him. Also, it shows how Atreus's noble goals were destroyed by manipulation. His lack of control motivates his fear and in result, Atreus acts impulsively, committing barbaric acts. It wasn't until he accepted his past, learned from his mistakes, and made a stand against the will of the gods and destiny, that he regained control of his actions and learned to live without fear.

What follows is a brief summary of the major characters in this story, their main conflicts and motivations, and how they fit into the play's narrative structure. In the Prologue, King Atreus's spirit starts on his throne, reflecting about his life. He states that he is willing to review it for the audience. We quickly see how his impetuous character leads to his demise. Right away, in Act One, Atreus commits his first major mistake that condemns him for the rest of his life. Atreus is a young prince, heir to the throne of Olympia. He is the firstborn of King Pelops and Queen Hippodamia, and the older brother of Thyestes and of his stepbrother Chrysippus. He is a happy, skilled, and active child, but is afraid of making mistakes. He carries full responsibility in his duties and tends to be prudent, but when he loses control, is dominated by impulsiveness.

Thyestes is Atreus's twin brother. He is skilled, but slower and weaker than Atreus. He is always competing with Atreus, looking to surpass him to demonstrate how valuable he is, but doesn't succeed. He always carries a dagger to make him feel more secure and intimidating. Not being able to beat his brother at anything has him frustrated and makes him feel inferior. He feels a need for recognition, and even identifies himself as Atreus's shadow.

Syneida is a young and nervous employee of the royal family. She is in charge of taking care of and attending Pelops's sons. Syneida knows that Chrysippus is the more complicated to take care because he likes to do what he wants, but she works as hard as she can to do her best to please the royal family.

Hippodamia is Atreus's powerful mother, that only recognizes a greater power in her husband. She can't forget Pelops's unfaithfulness because she feels it threatens her

and her sons' foundation in the royal family. She is outraged by the fact that Atreus's stepbrother has a chance of becoming King of Pisa, because he is not her son. She communicates with the gods and realizes she has to eliminate Chrysippus from their lives. Hippodamia loves Atreus and Thyestes, and to protect their future wealth, is willing to do whatever is necessary to eliminate Chrysippus.

Chrysippus is the son of a Nymph with whom Pelops had an affair. He is spoiled, delicate, whiny and not skilled as his stepbrothers. He just cares about himself and his commodities. When his stepbrothers confront him, he speaks his mind and shows himself to be more arrogant than ever. Hippodamia tries to ignore him as much as she can but Pelops gives him a subtle special treatment and seems to favor him.

Pelops is a calm and wise king but not afraid of use his power to maintain order. He is serious, calculating, and organized. Pelops keeps the kingdom improving and hopes to do the same with his family. He tries to keep a balance of affection between his three sons because he feels Hippodamia is rejecting Chrysippus.

The story follows the consequences of these character's choices, beginning with the murder of Chrysippus. Hippodamia, desperate about the potential loss of her power to a bastard, manipulates Atreus to confront Chrysippus. Atreus, filled with doubts, acts impulsively with Thyestes. Filled with frustration, they cause the death of Chrysippus. When Pelops finds out their crime, he curses and exiles Atreus and Thyestes to avoid killing his own sons. He also orders Syneida to make sure they never return to Olympia and keeps Hippodamia close to him to make sure she suffers until her last days.

In Act Two, approximately 15 years later, Atreus and Thyestes find out the news about the death of the King of Mycenae and compete for the throne. Atreus starts this act as a more temperate and prudent character while Thyestes developed more attitude, self-assurance and a feeling of superiority than before. Both maintain a close sibling relation until the possibility to rule a kingdom presents itself one more time. Thyestes analyzes the possibility of killing Sthenelus to get power and Atreus increase his doubts about Thyestes's true intentions of sharing the kingdom. It made Atreus keep the sacrifice of the lamb a secret. In the process of selecting the best lamb to offer to Artemis, Atreus decided to sacrifice a different lamb, thus adding to the curse of his family. This is another example of how his impulsive behavior leads him to make choices unacceptable to the gods.

Then, we see the first and only direct contact from a god, when Hermes gives Zeus's message to Atreus. It was a decisive moment where Zeus showed his support on Atreus. Ironically, Hermes would like to see Atreus and Thyestes confront each other. Therefore, he didn't take care of explaining clearly what Atreus had to do, and just limited his actions to fulfill Zeus's order. Here, we can see how the gods intervene and manipulate Atreus's decision on his search for power. Atreus proved he had Zeus's support by predicting the change in the sunrise. The gods inspire respect but also fear. That's why no character dared to go against Atreus's prediction, and Sthenelus crowned him King of Mycenae.

Aerope, the attractive, elegant, friendly and self-confident wife of Atreus, got jealous by the secret interaction of the Shepherdess and Atreus. It made her vulnerable,

so she let herself be seduced by Thyestes, betraying Atreus. Both betrayals affected Atreus emotionally. He showed impulsiveness again, immediately after the coronation, exiling his brother and wife. However, this act also showed how he was maturing because he could easily order to kill both of them. It proved that he still was a fair ruler but with a huge burden.

In Act Three, 10 years later approximately, the relationship between Atreus and Thyestes get worse. Atreus missed his son, Pleisthenes. He didn't know where Thyestes or Aerope were hiding, but he understood that his son was safe with his mother. Also, he had other two sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus, and he was trying to keep a stable life by raising them and being in charge of the kingdom. However, his mind didn't really rest, and when he killed Pleisthenes, and recognized him as his lost son, it drove him into madness. He found out where to find Thyestes and decided to avenge the death of his son.

When Atreus discovered that Thyestes had three sons, he ordered the Captain to kill and cook them for Thyestes's dinner. The Captain was in shock, but he had no choice but to execute the command without questioning. We can see how Atreus lost his judgment and acted impulsively once again. This decision will ultimately contribute to his downfall. Thyestes cursed Atreus and swore vengeance over his dead sons. The only character that dares to confront Atreus and make him reflect on his actions was Syneida.

She served and advised Atreus in how a king should be. When she confirmed that Atreus ordered to kill and cook Thyestes son's, she decided to quit serving Atreus. There is no more moral support from other characters toward Atreus because it was a terrible

action. His loneliness would make him reflect about his life and how much suffering he had to endure, and also allow him to realize the god's manipulative presence in all of it.

It is important to note that Thyestes is also a puppet of the gods. In another example of divine manipulation, Pythia, a high priestess of the god Apollo, arrives at Thyestes's house to tell him he can kill Atreus. The gods used Pythia to send a message to Thyestes and keep the family conflict going. We can see how the gods manipulated Thyestes by making him see only one solution, but the gods' help has always a price. A sacrifice needed to be made. In this case, Thyestes needed to rape his own daughter. He was immersed in so much pain, after losing his three sons and noticing his wife's death, that he agreed with the command of the gods and raped Pelopia, and later wandered alone for almost two decades waiting for the fulfillment of Pythia's vision.

In Act Four, approximately 20 years later, Atreus confronts his destiny. Atreus is shown to be more mature, poised, wise, and exhausted. Even though he wants to forget the conflict with his brother, he just doesn't trust him. When the final confrontation begins, Atreus easily dominates the combat. When Atreus has the opportunity to kill Thyestes and Aegisthus, he reconsiders and realized that everything he has suffered has been a game between the gods.

In the Epilogue, Atreus's spirit acknowledges his past and declares that he will not make the same mistakes again and that he will master his impulses on his new path because no one controls him anymore. He rejects the control of destiny and the gods and feels free without being afraid to be himself.

The central theme of the play is about the control we have in our lives. Atreus lived in a period where the gods manipulate everyone, and in which destiny writes their future. Atreus, at the end of his life, gains control of it and manages to break that imposition. Atreus drags with him a family curse since his grandfather, Tantalus, killed and served his own son, Pelops, as a stew for the gods to prove how omnipotent they were. With that curse, his life has no possibility of success. He was destined to fail at some point, and he did when he killed Chrysippus. At that moment, Pelops cursed him, and Atreus started his doomed journey with his brother. Then, when Atreus killed his own nephews, he was cursed one more time. Thyestes cursed Atreus and established that he was not going to rest until Atreus is dead. Neither of them regains a normal life. Their past hunted them until they met again and ended their misery fulfilling the oracle's premonition.

Atreus showed us many forms of manipulation that affected him during his life. His father's interest in him as an "older brother role model" makes him suffer mentally and physically, doubting of himself. His mother's interest in eliminating his stepbrother makes him confront and kill Chrysippus. Thyestes's interest in competing for the throne of Mycenae makes him feel the necessity of contacting the gods and sacrificing a lamb to please the gods. Zeus's interest in him having the throne inspires him to keep competing for it. Thyestes interest in killing Atreus makes him kill Pleisthenes. The death of his son makes Atreus dive into madness and kill his three nephews. We can see how Atreus felt trapped by the actions of other characters, and his impulsive reactions did not help him get rid of his problems.

Atreus spent a long time reflecting on his actions and, when Thyestes and Aegisthus tried to kill him at the end of the play, he went against their expectations. Atreus decided not to kill them. He forgives them with the hope of a better life for all. However, Atreus died, and his destiny was fulfilled. It's a poetic irony. He had no choice. The events of his life had to happen because he lives in the mythic ancient Greece where destiny and the gods rule. Nevertheless, he felt he selected a path and that's what matters to him. Is what makes him feel free. He was conscious about the manipulations and made a choice not to please others, but himself. His final decision was not forced by anyone but himself. The play's theme invites us to ask ourselves, who knows if our destiny is written? Who knows if the gods exist? The important thing is to trace your path according to what you want, not to what others want from you.

The genre of the play is a tragedy. We can see the tragic path of Atreus as he starts as a good prince headed for a prosperous future, only to transform into a barbaric king capable of horrendous acts. Atreus was brought down by his impulsiveness. His flaw made him an easy target for any manipulation. He was no hero but was clear about his moral role and duties. When his morals failed and he mistakenly killed his own son, it inspired the equally terrible killing of his nephews. It's a tragedy because, even though he found the solution to his torments by forgiving his brother, he nevertheless got killed by those he forgave.

The acting style will be realistic as the lines are formal but contemporary, but the production technical elements of costume, sound and set will be done with a classical ancient Greek approach. All the technical elements, including the lighting, will need to

seem like they become progressively darker, dimming with the progression of the story to show how the situation darkens gradually while Atreus transitions into madness.

As a director, I want to present how Atreus's impulsiveness makes it hard for him to control himself. We live in a world manipulated by the people in power that make decisions that affect us. When those decisions affect us negatively, we need to do something about it, but we can't just react rashly and recklessly. It might be useful if we think before we act so that we do not make the situation worse and regret our actions. By learning to control our impulses we can be able to make wiser choices that do not corrupt our integrity and values. We live in a different time period from Atreus in which gods and destiny don't have the same significance. We can take control of our lives and believe in the possibility of redemption and the necessity of faith that things can improve. With that in mind, I also wanted to give the audience the opportunity to explore their own empathy and force them to consider if they judge Atreus for his actions even though they know his circumstances. At the end, the play is not about finding another way to resolve Atreus's problems; it's about understanding Atreus's situation and recognizing that he is human and vulnerable, just like us.

Each actor in the cast should be able to play several characters. Normally, the play can have more than 30 actors, but it will be better to have as small of a cast as possible. We are been very cautious to avoid getting infected by COVID. The COVID virus has been affecting everyone in the world during the past year. Therefore, the actors will need to create very different interpretations for each of their roles, so the audience does not get confused when they see the same actor playing several characters. Some

actors will need to be able to represent the passage of time with their characters as they get older. The costumes will also need to represent the passage of time.

The cast should also be willing to work as an ensemble and be responsible for all props, as well as set and costume changes. I would like to work with new actors and, if it's possible, give an opportunity to the actors that I was supposed to work with last year when COVID made us cancel our production of *Black Comedy*.

In conclusion, by presenting *Atreus*, I will expose to our generation a new story about a classic character. One quarter of the ancient tragic Greek plays that survived are about the House of Atreus, but none tell Atreus's complete story. Now, we can fill the gap we have in our theatrical history about Atreus and increase the interest on the classical myths.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Since ancient Greek mythology comes from an oral tradition from the Bronze Age, the specific years of Atreus's life are uncertain. To get close to a possible exact date, we can use as a reference the Bronze Age years from 3,200 BCE and 1,000 BCE. To greatly reduce the time frame, we can consider that the Mycenaean civilization was established between 1,600 BCE and 1,100 BCE. One essential event that can get us closer to the date is the War of Troy because Atreus's sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus, are fundamental characters in that war. If we assume that the Fall of Troy started between 1,250 BCE and 1,200 BCE, we can conclude that the play *Atreus* should be happening between 1350 BCE and 1250 BCE. As a simplified time reference, we can conclude that it should take place in 1300 BCE, approximately. Also, is important to add that all surviving Greek plays were written hundreds of years later and didn't probably know the specific years either.

I started writing *Atreus* in 2010 and finished it in 2015. I wrote it because I was fascinated by Atreus and felt the need to connect all the parts of his legend in order to create one complete, performable story. Also, I was working as a high school teacher in Josefina Barceló High School in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico from 2008 to 2016, and as part of my after-school club initiatives, I wrote plays to be performed by my students. This particular play was more evolved than all the others that I wrote. It took me a few years

to develop, and I put it aside from time to time for long periods so that I could come back to it with fresh eyes and see if I still liked whatever I wrote. I wanted it to be as mythologically accurate as possible, according to the information I was gathering. However, there are details that I decide to take the liberty of adapting. An example of it was changing the name of the first kingdom from Pisa to Olympia. Pelops is the King of Pisa, and Olympia is part of his lands. I decided to keep him as King of Olympia because when I write it in Spanish, the word “Pisa” sounds exactly as the word “pizza”, the food. Students laughed constantly at rehearsal and so I preferred to edit it. Also, the word Olympia sounds and represents a more epic concept than Pisa. An essential aspect of the play that I knew would be different from the classic Greek tragedies were some elements of the style. The language needed to be contemporary to make it more appropriate for my students and the school community that was going to be the audience. I also decided to use a representational approach than a presentational. In the presentational approach, used in classic Greek tragedies, the actors acknowledge the audience, and heighten their movements and speeches. On the other part, the representational is a style used in realistic acting. *Atreus* have a more realistic approach in the way the dialog take place. I wrote the characters and their situations with actors unaware of the audience presence. Therefore, the representational was more appropriate.

An important detail about the play *Atreus* is that it was first written in Spanish. I worked on the translation during 2019 and 2020 to be able to present it as my thesis project during my third year of my Master of Fine Arts in Directing at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The process was interesting and challenging. The connotation of

certain words and the rhythm of the lines can change with the language. I had to be careful on each word and, on many occasions, I could not simply do a literal translation. It was harder than expected, but I really wanted to direct the play at the University and embrace the challenge. I decided to search for all the help I could get to polish the translation. Also, I invited the actors to bring to my attention any doubt, concern or suggestion about it during the rehearsals. I was and still am open to edit it as much as necessary to make all of us understand and enjoy it better.

When I originally discussed the idea of the play with my high school students, it had a great effect on all of us. We even named our theatre club “Atreo”, which is the Spanish version of the name Atreus. The first act was performed for the first time in 2016 in a National School Theatre Exhibition in Puerto Rico. Then, we performed the first and second act in April that same year in Juan B. Miranda middle school in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Eventually, the first act was presented again in other events. Finally, when I start working at Inés María Mendoza High School in Caimito, Puerto Rico, the new theatre club, that also was named “Atreo”, presented the complete play for the first time on April 28, 2017.

With the play, I took the liberty of changing the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action. Those three concepts determine a basic common quality on how the classic tragic plays were written. Instead of one place, the play develops in several places between Olympia and Mycenae. Rather than having the action happening in a maximum of 12-hour period of time, the events happen approximately during 50 years of Atreus’s life. Likewise, instead of just one action developed though the story, I have many actions

and develop the characters' stories as long as they are related by cause and effect to the main Atreus's storyline.

In mythology, the people thought the gods and destiny controlled everything during the Ancient Greek period. There was a god for every aspect of life, and it was important to please the gods to avoid suffering their fury. A happy god helps, but an unhappy god punishes. The twelve main gods rule on Mount Olympus. Either Hestia or Dionysus are part of the twelve gods depending on the version of the story. The gods like supplicants. Those persons that pray or ask for something in a respectful way to a powerful god should receive the god's blessing and have a prosperous life. The supplicants gain the favor of the gods, especially if they add gifts to their prayers. The play makes direct references to Zeus, Artemis, Hades and Hermes, four out of the twelve major gods. We see how the characters mention Zeus, Artemis or Hades either to ask them for help or to use them as threats, like when Atreus threatens to send Thyestes to Hades. Hermes is the only god character that has a dialog with the mortals. As a messenger, he delivers a message from Zeus. It shows how the gods interfere directly with Atreus's life. In this case, it is to try to help him in his quest for power because Atreus is a direct descendant of Zeus himself and, through the myths of Greek history, we know how Zeus interferes to help his descendants. For example, he gave Perseus the sword to cut Medusa's head, or when he made the Moraes, the three goddesses who oversee fate, resurrect Pelops and reassembled his severed parts. Besides the gods, the representation of destiny is made with the character Pythia. She is a vessel through which Apollo speaks to tell his prophecies. It proves how Apollo interferes with Atreus's

timeline to harm him. We can see how the gods and destiny manipulate the human's future. In Atreus's story, everything originates from his grandfather Tantalus. That is the beginning of the House of Atreus's curse.

The House of Atreus is the name given to the five generations of Atreus family. It includes the two generations before and the two generations after Atreus. It started with Tantalus, son of Zeus and the goddess Plouto. He doubts the god's capacity to know everything, so killed his own son, Pelops and served his pieces in a stew at a feast with the gods to disprove the god's omniscience. The insult infuriates the gods and Zeus punishes Tantalus eternally. Tantalus ended up chained in a pool of water forever thirsty and hungry. He was "tantalized" with food and drink that was always out of reach. Pelops was reborn and his shoulder, eaten by Demeter who was distracted grieving the loss of her daughter Persephone, was replaced with ivory. Tantalus's crime started the House of Atreus' curse.

In the second generation, we have Broteas, Niobe, and Pelops as Tantalus's children. They all suffered the effect of the curse Zeus laid on the family. Broteas was a hunter but honors Cybele, the mother of all gods and mistress of wild nature, instead of Artemis, the goddess of the hunt. Artemis did not approve of Broteas's actions and made him mad until he engaged in self-immolation. Niobe proclaimed herself to be a better mother than the goddess Leto. Apollo and Artemis, the children of Leto, were not happy with her proclamation and killed Niobe's seven sons and seven daughters as punishment. Pelops wanted to marry Hippodamia but her father, King Oenomaus, was afraid of the prophesy that he would be killed by his son-in-law. The king would only let his daughter

marry whoever bested him in a chariot race. All eighteen that tried had been killed for failing. Pelops asked for help from his former lover, the god Poseidon, and the god made a special chariot for him. Also, to secure his winning and evade death, Pelops bribed Myrtilus, servant of Oenomaus and son of Hermes, to sabotage the king's chariot. Pelops, as a reward for his service, promised Myrtilus half of the Kingdom and to let him have sex with Hippodamia the first night. Myrtilus accepted and the king died because of the sabotage. However, Pelops did not fulfil his promise and instead, threw Myrtilus off a cliff. Before Myrtilus died, he cursed Pelops and his descendants. Pelops already suffered death but, eventually, he would experience Hippodamia's suicide and the death of his son Chrysippus at the hands of his other 2 sons, Atreus and Thyestes.

The curse develops before it even gets to Atreus and we can see a clear connection to his ancestor's actions. We can see how Atreus gets mad and copies Tantalus's macabre action of serving his relatives in a stew. Also, we can see how Artemis is clearly not happy with Atreus's ancestors and the fact that Atreus did not sacrifice his best lamb as he promised. She ended up not helping Atreus gain the throne, as he begged her. Instead, since Artemis is also known as the moon goddess, she makes the moon light work over Thyestes and Aerope to create a connection between them, and to unite them against Atreus. Apollo, also not happy with Atreus's ancestors, and the fact that he had to follow Zeus's order and move the sun for Atreus, used Pythia as a vessel to tell Thyestes how to kill Atreus. Finally, Hermes was angry about Pelops betraying and killing his son, Myrtilus, and made the golden lamb appear in the Shepherdess's herd. Hermes knew Atreus would not kill the lamb, and therefore, would not fulfill the promise

he made to Artemis, and that he would suffer Artemis's fury for it. Then, Zeus made Hermes deliver a message of salvation to Atreus, but he just spoke in riddles to not make it easy for Atreus. He delivers his message in a hurry because he really doesn't care about Atreus succeeding. All this background information helps understand better the reasons of the god's actions during the play.

The third generation is Atreus and Thyestes, the main characters of my *Atreus* version. Seneca's play, called *Thyestes*, was written during the 1st century and is about this generation of the house of Tantalous. Seneca adapted his plays from Greek playwrights. He probably adapted his *Thyestes* version from Euripides's *Thyestes*, (of which only fragments survive). Seneca's version shows the rivalry between the twin brothers over the throne of Mycenae. It ends with Atreus killing Thyestes's sons and tricking him into eating them. Atreus is presented as a ruthless ruler and Thyestes suffers the madness of his crazy brother. It does not develop the background of the dinner event other than showing that Atreus was mad about the betrayal of Aerope and Thyestes. That's why, in my play, Atreus and Thyestes comment about the hero and the villain perspective. I don't want them to be identified as either. They are just humans with the potential to do good and bad depending on the circumstances and how much in control they are. I also added some circumstances in my version of *Atreus* that highlight the suffering of the characters. Pelops exiled and cursed Atreus and Thyestes for killing Chrysippus. Thyestes seduced Atreus's wife and stole his golden lamb. Atreus exiles Thyestes from Mycenae and Thyestes made Atreus kill his own son, Pleisthenes.

Thyestes cursed Atreus and his descendants for killing his sons. Also, Thyestes deceived his son, Aegisthus, to kill Atreus.

The fourth generation of The House of Atreus includes Agamemnon and Menelaus during the Trojan War, and how they both suffered their family curse. Agamemnon and Menelaus are symbolic characters in my *Atreus* version. I intentionally keep them hidden to divert attention away from those historically famous characters and give a spotlight to the not so famous characters. Finally, the fifth and last generation talks about Electra, Iphigenia, and how Orestes ends the curse by apologizing to the gods for his family's hubris, better known as excessive pride, after he also suffered the consequences of the curse.

The three surviving classic Greek tragedians wrote about different sections of the House of Atreus. Aeschylus wrote *The Oresteia* (458 BCE) that includes the plays *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers* and *The Eumenides*. Sophocles wrote *Electra* (409 BCE), and Euripides wrote *Electra* (413 BCE), *Orestes* (408 BCE), *Iphigenia in Taurus* (414 BCE), and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (405 BCE). As a playwright myself, and a contributor to this wonderful House of Atreus myth, I've been sculpting and shaping the play every time I can. I will definitely keep listening to feedback and analyzing any possible addition to the story. I humbly received any type of criticism towards the play because it gave me the opportunity to improve it. Fortunately, the play has been well received every time I've worked with it. The casts, production teams and audience members have always expressed great positive feedback towards it. I'm happy to know they realized the effort and commitment involved in creating it. I have many plans with the story

including an eventual theatre script publication. I expect to keep making it greater and enjoying every time I see it on stage.

CHAPTER III

JOURNAL

Aug 24, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

Today we were supposed to have our first official production meeting to prepare the play *Atreus*, but only Dr. Heather Hamilton, my directing advisor, showed up. The notice about the meeting did not reach the rest of the team. The team is not complete yet. We hope to get an Assistant Stage Manager, Set Designer and Technical Director this afternoon, after department meeting with all the students. Hamilton and I decided to discuss the concept of the play to explore it. If we complete the team later today, we will be able to reschedule the meeting later this week. I hope we can find members that are interested in the play and not forced to work in a production.

Hamilton advised me to keep my expectations real regarding the Coronavirus. The possibility of cancellation is real, and she knows that since the play means a lot to me, if it is canceled, it can affect me emotionally. Luckily, I am already aware of the event since I had to experience a cancellation on last year's production of *Black Comedy*, and I'm ready to look for new alternatives. I recognized that the simple fact of having the play translated from Spanish to English was already a satisfactory achievement for my plans with the play. I took the opportunity to ask Hamilton to verify the edits I made to the play. She will verify and make recommendations about them.

Aug 31, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

Despite having pre-planned a recurring video conference room for our meetings using the Zoom platform, I had trouble with it because it wouldn't let me in as a host. I decided to send my production team another link and just keep going forward. We definitely have to flow in this process and events like this help to identify if we are all willing to flow. Since we have the hybrid attendance option, several attended in Zoom and several in person. I've work with most of my team before and I was very excited to have them on again and meet the new members. Heather Hamilton is the directing advisor. George Grubb is the technical advisor. Reina Beisell is the Production Stage Manager (PSM). Scott Anderson is the Scenic Designer. Morgan Benson is the Costume Designer. Jameson Bernhagen is the Lighting Designer. Jason Wagaman is the Sound Designer. Joshua Zietse is the Technical Director. I welcomed everyone, explained my concept, and clarified doubts.

I am grateful for the opportunity to do *Atreus* and wanted to discuss and hear their feedback about the play, but I understand that this was not the time, especially since we have already missed two meetings and we will not have next week meeting since it's a holiday. However, I made it clear that they can contact me if they want to talk about the play. Maybe I can have their reactions soon or at the end of the entire production, but criticism helps to improve. It will be fascinating to see if the process changes or reinforces their perspective about the play before and after working on it. It was interesting adjusting to the new "semi virtual" reality. I think zoom is a great tool to use

for meetings. I still prefer the in-person interaction because I feel it is more direct, personal and focused, but it's a new option that I will probably be use a lot from now on. After the meeting, later that day, Anderson asked me for a quick meeting to discuss his initial ideas. I liked that he was willing and eager to work. He commented on his preliminary ideas and I think they work really well with my concept.

Sept 4, 2020 Meeting with Set Designer 10:30 am

I met with Anderson again because he asked me to discuss some new ideas he has about the set. We are working with the limited budget we have, so we were looking to reuse things we have in stock. We discussed, in a general way, where each scene will happen in the space and how the transitions between each scene will be used to maintain a balance in the use of the scenic area. I asked for the purpose of the black background curtain because I would like him to explore the possibility of a white screen instead of the black. I think it could help create new environments with the lighting, but he preferred the black to not create distractions form the actors. I understand his preference and decide to keep the black. I will send him a preliminary list of props I might need to facilitate the process. I noticed that, since the set is close to the backstage wall, I need to verify that actors don't need to quickly cross backstage to get on stage. I was pleased to be able to clarify doubts to speed up the process that is behind schedule.

During the rest of this week, Anderson and I had some quick informal meetings. I asked him if we could include side curtains to cover the stairs on each side. It would help divide that space into different sections and make the continuation of the stairs look like

halls instead of seeing it similar to the rest of the floor. I also gave him a preliminary list of the props. Everything flowed normally and I enjoyed the process.

Sept 14, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

The designers presented their different ideas. Anderson commented on what we discussed during the past days to update everyone on the set. Wagaman commented that he would work with sounds that suggest a harmonious and happy atmosphere during the beginning of the play, and that they will intensify throughout the story while also maintaining a classic style in the design. Bernhagen reacted to the designs and will start working on integrating his lighting ideas to the set.

On the other hand, Benson presented images of clothing that inspired her to create more contemporary designs. I commented that all the designs established the atmosphere of the ancient Greek and the only contemporary approaches were the dialogue and the acting style to make the story more realistic for a general audience. I liked Benson's contemporary ideas and it would be interesting to work a future concept with that style, but they don't seem to be aligned with the other designs. I will have a more in-depth dialogue with Benson to explore her ideas, but I had to make it clear that the play is still set in ancient Greece and is not a modern play.

I also presented the idea of creating an official shirt for the play. Benson commented that she can make them. I would be very happy to create it because I understand that it helps to strengthen the group as a community and promote the play.

Personally, it's something I used to do as a teacher with my theater clubs when I directed plays.

One design that we must decide soon will be how to make the lambs the Shepherdess brings to show Atreus in Act 2. Normally, I would select kids to play the lambs but with COVID, we will just cast adults. It will be a nice challenge for the team. I invited the designers to explore the possibilities. Probably, we will have to create them with lights and sound effects because if we dress adults with costumes, it can create an unwanted effect of humor in the audience and alter the tragedy completely. I hope to see costume renderings and the preliminary set design in our next meeting.

Sept 14, 2020 Meeting with Costume Designer 11:30 am

I met briefly with Benson to discuss in detail her ideas for the costumes and start the shirt creation process. I explained that I want to keep a balance in all technical areas and let her know my concern about her contemporary approach. I was willing to analyze her ideas and consider some minimal “contemporary inspired” alterations, but I reminded her that it should look ancient Greek, not contemporary. I would not want her to waste time and do unnecessary work, but since she really wants to try, I suggested that she send me the first designs during the week as soon as she finishes them. That way, I can give her feedback and make sure she stays right on track with the concept we discuss during production meetings. Then, we discuss the shirt idea. She will look for prices and will let everyone know at the next meeting.

Sept 14, 2020 Meeting with Costume Designer 5:00 pm

I met again with Benson on Zoom and she showed me images of the style she wants to create. On this occasion, unlike the images she showed me before, I saw a more Greek and less contemporary approach in her ideas. I think it can work with the concept as long as it stays mainly classical Greek style. I like to give the designers the opportunity to elaborate their ideas and see how it can fit the concept. If they are passionate about it, they will work more motivated.

Sept 21, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00am

During the past week, the theater department had several students infected with Coronavirus. For everyone's safety, the faculty took the decision to stop all performances' processes and postpone them for two weeks. I understand and support the decision. Our health is more important. The famous quote "The show must go on" has become relative. We must be flexible. To help the department, I suggested to Hamilton that I was open to change the theatre or the seating setting of the Andreas Theatre if it was necessary according to the changes they were doing to the season.

So far, the play *Hay Fever* has been canceled from the Department's theatre season in order other plays could be presented. I appreciate the faculty's approach to prioritize the productions of graduate directing students over professors' productions. The experience will definitely benefit the students the most. Our production of *Atrous* was affected with new presentation dates. However, the auditions will continue to be the

same day we announced it to keep students active. Instead of doing it in person, each student will submit a video of their audition.

Aside from catching up on Coronavirus events and how they are affecting us, Benson showed me several of her costume designs. I saw the ancient Greek emphasis and made some suggestions on the ones that were too contemporary. Bernhagen presented some lighting ideas. It's interesting to see how every day the play gets its unique form by all the ideas.

Also, in the past few days I approached Anderson to see if he could create a new design for the image of the shirt and probably also use it for the image of the play. Today, I asked him about the image, and he told me that he will work on it. I could use an image I already have from the past production of *Atreus*, but I think it would be more meaningful if we created a new image for this event. He told me he would contact Benson and discuss it. I hope we can see the progress of that idea next week.

Sept 28, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00am

We discussed the news we received last Friday about the new updates in the season. Now, our play will be presented on January 20 to 24 and we can start rehearsing on November 26. The audition will get pushed forward one week and now it will be on October 5. These are uncertain times, and we need to go with the flow. From the side proscenium configuration, now we have to adapt everything to a deep thrust seat configuration. When this type of situation happens, it may take us out of our comfort zone, but we don't have to turn it into a conflict. We can actually appreciate it as a new

challenge and a way to grow as a team. That was precisely what we did. Everyone was willing to adapt and keep enjoying the process, and I really felt that we all love what we do. Since we lost a few weeks of meetings in the past, now we can get back on track and have more time to work on details.

As for the new updates in the designs, Anderson presented an adapted ground plan with the new configuration. Benson mentioned that for studio shows this season we should try to avoid creating any new costumes from scratch. We will need to reuse from what we have. That might affect Benson's ideas for the costumes, but she is analyzing the possibilities she has in stock and will come with designs next week. Wagaman presented some sound samples. We talked about the time between scenes and concluded that it should be short to make the play less long. However, it's interesting to compare it to the first time I presented the play. The transition between scenes took plenty of time because we needed to make various set changes. We included the set changes as part of the presentation to show the audience the complex work that we do in a play. Even though it added 20 to 25 minutes to the play, people were not bothered by how long it was because they were engaged. Now, it will be a different audience and not a high school community.

Oct 5, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00am

Benson showed sketches of the costumes for the first time to show her ideas and I noticed they were too contemporary. It was not what I imagined from our discussions and I had to remind her to be careful with the contemporary approach. I think what

happen in this case was that Benson and I had a different perspective on what “details” means. For me, details are something that go unnoticed except for those who pay attention to them. Looking at Benson's sketches, I realized that she was creating contemporary designs with Greek details.

Hamilton clarified to Benson that the classic Greek style has been the concept for the designs since the first day. Grubb defended Benson's proposal arguing that I have always accepted them. I commented that I had restated and clarified the ancient Greek approach in several meetings, particularly when I saw Benson’s designs.

Oct 5, 2020 Audition Process

Due to the Coronavirus cases that occurred in the past weeks and as a precautionary measure, we maintained the online audition process. Students began submitting their videos yesterday and I watched them all. Unlike the regular process, I took my time, and I didn't have to see them all at once or in a row. However, seeing them live gives another vibe to the process. It tests the actors for what they will face when audience is present. Also, I was not always able to appreciate the details of their facial expressions because some stood too far away from the camera. I made myself accessible in any way I could help, and some used the opportunity to ask questions and clarify doubts regarding the process.

Personally, I prefer to work with actors and crew that really want to be part of the play. In this case, some actors wanted to be part of *Atreus*, but they were already in another production. The actors who are in *The Tempest* or who want to be in *Angel Street*,

will not be able to audition for *Atreus* because at some point, the rehearsals or presentations of their plays will occur at the same time as *Atreus*.

From an educational perspective, it is positive because it gives the opportunity to other actors in the department. However, the professional theatre is very competitive, and you have to know how to shine in order to be cast. As a director, it's sad to not be able to have an actor you know can be spectacular, but as a teacher, it's interesting to explore the possibilities with others.

During the audition, some actors were not willing to audition because of the risk of Coronavirus, and others were already part of other productions. Originally, I limited the total number of actors to 10. Each actor would have three to four characters. Also, with the Coronavirus, it is convenient to have a small group, but since we would also need staff to change the scenes, help with the costumes and take care of all props, I preferred to have actors who do their roles and also help in the process as an ensemble. Therefore, I increased the total cast to 15 actors. I have an amazing cast list. Please see the appendix. What I like most about the idea of increasing my casting total was that I could give more students the opportunity to be in a play. Sadly, I cannot cast them all and one student that did not get cast asked me for feedback. For me, it's important to attend to the emotional process of the actors to help them progress. The call for help should never be ignored because it might affect the person in need, and it could even lead to a serious consequence.

The next day, I met with that student and gladly gave my advice. I explained that each director's style is different. I recommended that she read the play she is auditioning

for and identify characters that interest her. Then, when she does another audition, she can choose a scene and project the characteristics and style of that character that interest her. That way, she can make a bigger impression on the director by relating her performance to the character. Of course, everything also depends on other specific factors that the director is looking for, and the skills of the actor. Interestingly, she was one of my options for one of the characters, but another actress was luckier, mainly because I have had more interaction with her, and I know I can count on her. This was one of the recommendations that I emphasized the most. Make yourself known. She should be known more outside of productions. In the professional world, in many cases, it depends more on who you know than how good you are. In the university, I like to work with actors that make the process enjoyable. When I cast, I avoid conflicting and irresponsible people, and I appreciate the ones that had showed me respect, professionalism and joy.

Many of us have gone through those frustrating moments of not being cast in the plays for which we audition. The audition process is an emotionally uncomfortable one for me as a director because I wish I could cast all of them. However, at least I am giving some the opportunity to perform. Maybe, in other circumstances, they may not get it.

Oct 8, 2020 Meeting with Technical Advisor and David McCarl

I had an interesting informal conversation with Grubb and another with the costume designer professor, David McCarl, about a situation related to our costume designs. I did not know that there was a conflict developing, and I appreciate that Grubb

communicated it to me. The situation occurred during last meeting when Benson presented her sketches and ideas for her designs. Apparently, my approach was not direct enough during the meetings for everyone to understand what Benson and I were working on. My mistake was not to clarify to everyone what I meant when I “accepted” Benson’s design. I mainly was looking at them and understanding her approach, but not really accepting them as is. It was more a possibility that needed some adjustments that we could work more calmly after the meeting and talk about them in detail.

When I give my concept as a director, I am not against seeing any kind of proposals from designers. This is a team effort, and everyone must contribute. As a director, I have the responsibility to propose a concept, but that does not mean I cannot alter it if I consider the change appropriate. I give designers space to present their ideas no matter how much they differ from my concept. This situation could be easily resolved once I gave Benson my detail feedback on the costumes, but I haven’t had the opportunity to talk to her after the meeting.

Oct 9, 2020 Meeting with Costume Designer 10:30am

Today I was able to discuss in detail with Benson all her sketches for her costume designs. We talked about each character and their uniqueness. Among the most significant changes I suggested were the elimination of pants and the addition of shirts to the characters. Also, we focused on the necessary changes in the same character through the acts to show how they grow old. We talked and made decisions as a team. She felt calmer and more confident in getting her job done. This is the kind of process that I like

to go through with my designers. A direct conversation where we can spend time on details and clarifying any questions we might have.

Oct 12, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

I started the meeting recognizing and honoring the work of the advisors for bringing up to me the concern there was about the concept. I clarified again that all designs should be executed in an ancient Greek style, not a modern style. The contemporary aspect Morgan was exploring with the costumes were just details and should not change the ancient Greek style. It is important that everybody is clear and in the same path.

I wanted to make sure everybody was ready to finish their designs. I know the emotions in general in the department are down because of the changes of everyday life that Coronavirus made us do. All designers compromise to finish their designs within the next two weeks. I'm going with the flow, but we do need to finish designing it to be able to start building it. Zietse and Grubb discussed the \$600 Budget and established an amount for each area. The set will get \$300, props \$50, costumes \$100, sound \$25, and lighting \$75. We managed to divide it into all areas and still have \$50 left over for emergency. Benson is much clearer and secure about her designs. She said that she will have all character's sketches colored for next week. Anderson told me that I will have some set pieces like the bed and tables to move them freely on the acting space. He is working with the columns idea and I asked to have a colored set design for the next meeting. Wagaman sent me a sound plot last night. He included scene transition sounds

along with some other sounds to use on key moments that will help the scene improve its dramatic mood. There are other key moments I would like to add, but first I need to listen to them. I let him know that I would like to meet with him during the week to listen to all the sounds. I invited him to explore in what lines he would like to start each sound to discuss it in our meeting. I highlighted to Bernhagen the importance of the sun rising light effect. I'm willing to block differently the movements of the actors to be able to have the desired effect with the lights in that part. It is an important symbolic message to create a shadow on Thyestes that comes from Atreus.

Aside from the designs, we decided to not have backstage crew other than Verdict because now we have more actors that can help with the set, props and costume changes. Also, the creation of the image for the shirt will be analyzed by Anderson and Benson this week. It is taking more time that I would like, but since it's not an essential part of the play, I will not push the idea. If it happens, then great.

Oct 19, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

We are one week away to start rehearsals and the set and costume designs are almost finished. I started by announcing a rehearsal that we need to add on Sunday November 8 because there were three scenes in Act Two that were not included in the schedule when I updated it to make the Sundays only available for emergency rehearsal. All actors should be ready to rehearse during those days, but I will do what I can to not rehearse on Sundays, unless we really need it. I believe that we all need to have a balance and not over rehearse. This particular play might not require too much rehearsal

since there is no dance or elaborate fighting scenes that requires too much collective coordination of movements or singing. Each actor can easily work their characters at their own time, and we should be able to achieve a lot of progress during the days we have now on the agenda.

As for the design's updates, Anderson showed the colored set. It looks beautiful and I can see the characters playing in that space. I love the variation of colors on the ground that will help reflect textures and colors when we add the lighting. I wish the platforms could be bigger, but the space is limited. I also would like the center space could be wider, but it will change the composition. The dinner table will be set horizontally and now it will not fit in the ground framed by the marble, part of it will be in the grass. I know the audience will follow the theatrical convention, but it changes the picture I had in mind. That's part of the production discussion, and I'm willing to adapt my vision of the play depending on the ideas they bring. Benson showed all the costumes colored. I have a couple of recommendations, like to be careful with an excessive color variation to keep a specific recognition of the colors representing the period. I asked her to meet me during the week to discuss them in more detail, but in general, they were great. Wagaman played some sound cues that he is working on. I liked the idea of the vibrating tension increasing during the sunset and the townspeople talking in the background. He still needs to edit and mix them, but he clarified some question he had.

It's interesting that I've been making myself available since the first day to answer any question at any time, but sometimes they feel more comfortable doing it during the

meetings. I would prefer if they asked me whenever they have the concern. That way, instead on bringing a doubt to the meeting, they can actually bring a solid possibility based on the clear path. Either way, I like they can clarify any doubt. At the end, I mentioned the shirts, but it still in progress and next week we should expect a design for it.

Oct 21, 2020 Meeting with Anderson 8:00 am

We analyzed the possibility for the cart. The instruction Anderson told me he got was that we can't spend money, resources or much time in building it. I think we have time to build something using some of the wood we have available in the shop that is not reserved for anything, and that it should not take much time to build, but I understand that we needed to work with what we have. I let Anderson know that I need a cart that we can push in from the left downstage vom, and park it close to the entrance of the vom where three actors can hide as if they were laying down in the back of the cart and jump from it to the stage. Anderson mentioned that we only have one wheel. I hope we can find other options, or I may have to explore the possibility of showing the cart from just one side once I have an official design of it.

Oct 21, 2020 Meeting with Costume Designer 11:00 am

Benson and I went over each design and I asked her for her reasons behind some of the costumes. She clarified the type of color she was aiming for each character because sometimes the sketch didn't reflect the specific color she wanted. I understood

her situation because I experimented the same thing when I designed during my costume class. In her designs there were differences such as a gold color for the guards instead of yellow. Sthenelus's tone of green and red should be darker instead of bright like a Christmas combination. Aegisthus should have a darker purple instead of a light tone. Pythia should have a reddish tone instead of a purple tone. Pelopia should have light pink instead of a solid pink. Finally, Shepherdess should have fade out green instead of solid green. We changed a few details like making Atreus's skirt longer, adding gold detail to Thyestes's first costume to match his brothers, and took out Aerope's first skirt instead of keeping it as a first layer in Act Three. I think we have a solid base idea for all the costumes. Now, it will all depend on what Benson can find in the costume warehouse.

Oct 26, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

I made some reminders about scenic elements and props that we need. Anderson will start looking. Benson was absent, but I know she is still looking for costumes. Wagaman is searching for sounds and Bernhagen is exploring some effects with the lights. I invited all designers, especially set and costumes, to come see the rehearsals and show the actors their progress, if they wanted. I know that helps raise the excitement of the collective about the production. Anderson also showed the t-shirt main image with a person standing representing Atreus and we announced it in case anyone would like to buy one. I like the image for the t-shirt, but I will probably find a more detailed image for the poster.

Oct 26, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

My first day with the cast was great and left me with great expectations about what the experience will be. Ironically, it did not start good at all. We had problems with the availability of the rehearsal space because many people use and reserve the classroom number 113 and we ended up with no space to rehearse. However, that changed at the last minute when the people in 113 let us rehearse. The department should have a better, more logical and accessible way for students to book rooms in which to rehearse. I reserved and confirmed the space a few days ago, but other people did too. I asked for another space and they assign me the choir room, but the music students were using it and they have priority.

Besides the situation with the space, we had two students that were in contact with people that might have Coronavirus. They have to join the rehearsal by zoom, but today we will just be reading and analyzing the play. When we start blocking tomorrow, it will be interesting and a challenging.

The last not comfortable situation was that McKenna Prill, one of my actresses, was needed at another production to understudy a character because the actor might have Coronavirus. Matthew Caron is the director of that production, called *The Tempest*. He is having an emergency because he will present soon. It was not an easy decision, but I let her be in both productions. It will create a hole in my rehearsals that the ASM might cover, but I understand the emergency and it was the right thing to do to help a fellow

director and their production. It's admirable that we all are willing to flow and make the best out of those kinds of emergencies.

Other than that, what was really great about the rehearsal today was the discussion of the protocol for *Atreus* and the reading of the play. The actors were very enthusiastic, eager to learn and be creative. I gave descriptions about the characters and my concepts on them to help the actor's ideas for characterizations. I hope by tomorrow both students that were on Zoom confirm they don't have Coronavirus and can join us to rehearse in-person.

Oct 27, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Today we started blocking. It took a bit more than I planned, but mainly because we had another space inconvenience before we started and that took some time. Luckily, we are all very understanding, and everything ran without any other inconvenience. We completed the blocking that was in the agenda and I had time to give notes. All cast members work as a team, helping in whatever was needed. They moved props and replaced an actress that had to be online because she was exposed to someone with Coronavirus.

The rehearsal agenda was originally planned according to everyone's availability. However, two actors will not be able to join us for two weeks because they are roommates with someone with Coronavirus. I hope they don't get infected. We will be working online with them for now. I have a plan on having understudies, but since their parts are not long, we can polish them once they get back. I can have individual

rehearsals with them to help them get what I expect to see in each character. I trust they can handle it and will be great. I hope no one else gets close to someone with Coronavirus.

Oct 28, 2020 Meeting with an actor 3:00 pm

Seth Honerman, one of the actors of the play, helped me with the pronunciation of the Greek names and places. We compared the pronunciation in Spanish and English and used the IPA rules to determine the way to tell them. I am inclined to use pronunciations that sound similar to the Spanish names because the vowel sounds in the romance language are closer to the Greek. Once the list is ready, all cast members will have a copy to make sure all pronunciations are similar.

Oct 28, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

We continued blocking the second act. It was a nice rehearsal. In general, the actors received and executed the directions effectively. I noticed that one actor in some moments was altering too much of the blocking and I talked to him about his reasoning behind it. He had good ideas, but he was negatively affecting other characters by not keeping a similar routine. Also, the new position that the actor wanted gives him too much power in contrast with the main character. Actors can have great ideas for their characters, and I love to integrate them if they work in harmony with the rest of the characters, but that was not the situation here. I have to remind the actor that he is part of

a team and some actions can make him shine individually but at the expense of the other players. I invited him to keep exploring, but for the benefit of all.

Oct 29, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

We worked on the first act. This is the part of the play I've worked more in the past with my previous students. However, even though I presented the play in the past, blocking the actors now wasn't as easy and fast as I thought it would be.

It's always interesting to explore in new sets and theatre configurations, but the limitations of the masks and distancing are frustrating. As a director, you create the perfect scene in your mind, but those limitations altered the effect of the scene. We need to work around them to make them look normal. Audiences will probably notice and get affected by them, especially the masks, but they will understand they are a requirement to be able to perform.

Oct 30, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

One actor was absent and two were online because of Coronavirus. It's not the best situation to rehearse, but I'm glad the ones online are being as responsible as they can. I hope they are enjoying the process, and I do what I can to address them during the rehearsal to make them feel closer to us. Again, luckily, their characters have a short amount of participation during the play. It will be easier to work on details later when they can rehearse in-person. If I have to, I will rehearse with them individually to help them develop their characters.

Nov 2, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

The designers gave me their updates. Benson found one third of the costumes and will find the rest for next week. She did not show any today, but she said they were close to her designs. We talked about the bloody costume for Pelopia and the piece for Aerope's costume that Atreus will use to cover the lamb. Also, I clarified that, for transitions between the scenes, I prefer masks with Olympian god's faces. If we don't have any, we could use generic masks as long as they have the Greek classic style. Anderson will also start pulling set and props during the week. Bernhagen is planning on seeing the run through before we leave for Thanksgiving break to work on his lighting design. I let him know that I will block the dungeon scene in the downstage rectangle area. Wagaman showed a sound for Hermes's exit. I could not hear the sound clearly and I recommended that we meet during the week to listen to all the sounds he got so far and start analyzing them. I would definitely want to hear more sounds and he will have more for next week.

We also talked about the shirt. I would like the shirt to be ready as soon as possible, but from a casual conversation I had with Anderson during the week, he was thinking about doing them for January. I think it's taking a lot of time to do, but I know we all are busy and it's not a priority. Interestingly, a situation happened with the image for the shirt. I sent Anderson an image to establish a possibility of colors, but he assumed that I wanted to replace his image with the one I sent. Not sure how that happened, but it did.

After the meeting, Grubb talked to me about a situation with my style of suggesting ideas to the designers. It seems that my approaches to him have been taken like a mandatory suggestion. I've always been open and exposing ideas as suggestion to actors and designers, but I'm conscious that everyone could receive it differently. No matter how good you are, there could always be someone that consider you an enemy. That's why, I don't take things like this personally and just flow and do my best to clear the situation and go on with our goal.

In this case, Grubb talked about a chest box I suggested as a prop. During the past week, I sent an image of a chest box to Anderson to be considered as a possibility for a box we can use in the play. If he liked it, I would try to get it and we can use it. For me, it was no big deal, and I would not even mind paying for it since I wanted to get multiple copies and use them as a souvenir for the cast and crew. Sadly, Anderson took it as if I was not trusting his designs. That's a common challenge with the emails. They are more open to interpretation than an in-person conversation. My idea was not to do his design work, but to help because I casually see box and I thought it could work. If Anderson had reply he doesn't like it or he wanted to have something else, I would have just forgotten about it. In no way I wanted to impose any design.

I'm used to work in the school system where I constantly suggest ideas to ease the process and help my students create their own design. In our production, I had barely suggested any design ideas because they are working on them, but if I see something can help, I like to show it instead of regret having done it. Also, if I don't see an idea

developing or if it's going to a way, I don't see it fitting, I will suggest ideas to clarify my concept.

I do like and appreciate the teamwork where we can trust and help each other with our areas. I would not mind if any member, actor or designer, suggested a picture or a blocking to realize in a specific moment of the play. I would actually consider it and if I like it and it works to achieve what I want, I'll take it. That's my style. I don't know it all, nor I will ever. Therefore, other ideas can be helpful to keep growing. I think an important factor is that we don't know each other as well. If Anderson knew me, he would have understood my intentions and style of suggestion. If I knew him, I would have been extra careful with how I say things because looks like I'm not expressing myself effectively with him. I guess we are getting there. Two hours after the meeting with Grubb, I talked directly to Anderson to clarify my intentions.

Nov 2, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

It was a good day blocking Act Three scenes two, five, and six. We had a nice rhythm establishing the movement thru the areas. The actors flow very efficiently, and we completed it quickly. At the end, as usual, we did a run thru of the scenes to review that everything is clear for the actors.

Nov 3, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

We finished the blocking today. It was exciting to realize that we finished an important step. I asked the cast, particularly Siglin and Feist, if they were ready to start

rehearsing off book and they respond positively. It feels great when actors follow the agenda, but it doesn't happen every time. As a director, I like to confirm that we can stay on track if we need to change something in the agenda, or if I need to work a special coaching with any actor. I know that eventually I'll need to work with the actors that had been online. I will take extra time than planned but I trust they will get the blocking quickly and any setbacks because of Coronavirus will be restored successfully.

Nov 4, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Today we started working with characterizations and the intentions of the lines. I like to stop and take time to help the actors achieve what I expect from each character. Most of them quickly reached my basic expectations for the characters and we just started molding details to go deeper in their interpretation. I can say that it was successful, and I hope we continue with this great rhythm. It felt good and we achieved a lot of great things today. Some actors need to memorize some lines, but it was not a big deal. I'm sure they will get them memorized during the next few days.

Nov 5, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

We continued working the intentions of each line and we covered the first three scenes of Act Two. We worked over characterization and motivation of the actions, but it was difficult to polish the rhythm. The process was good, but not as efficient as yesterday, mainly because the lines were not completely memorized. We did cover all the pages we had in the agenda for today. The actors kept discovering things about their

characters that help them understand better their intentions on each line. I hope the actors memorize their lines the next time we cover these scenes so that we can work the characters in a deeper level.

Nov 6, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Today we worked with scenes four and five of Act Two. The memorization level was better than yesterday, but the actors still need to work on it because it affects the rhythm, interaction, characterization, and many other areas that we are polishing. We had two actors online that will be joining in-person rehearse next week. That will help me see the complete pictures of each scene and identify better the areas that we need to work. After the rehearsal, Beisell and I shared thoughts about the process. We are getting used to doing that and I like it because it makes the decision process about our next steps feel more like teamwork. I appreciate her perspective in the discussions we make because, as an assistant manager, she is the closest person to my directing process and understands better my perspective and goals. We decided to coordinate some time during the next week, out of the rehearsal schedule, to work individually with the actors that had been online to review their blocking and characterization. That way, it will help them to be more prepared to rehearse with the others.

Nov 8, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

One actress that was online had problems with her internet connection. Luckily, she and all actors that have been online the past weeks will be in-person during this week.

I will meet some of them outside the rehearsal time to work on their blocking and prepare them in any way they need to join the group rehearsal, so they don't feel behind in the process. The rehearsal, in general, was good, similar to the past few days. After the rehearsal, Inga stayed a little more time to work on her character, Syneida. I noticed she was not getting the idea I want to see in her character, and she was getting frustrated. We start talking about her character, her development with it and the necessary changes she needs to show based on the years that passed between each act. I was very direct with what I wanted, and she explored and got it. At the end, she managed to get many reactions in the way I visualize her character. She still needs to work on her voice to make it sound older, but what we worked today should help her to keep directing her characterization in the right direction and give more confidence. I know we have a schedule to follow, but if any actor needs my help, I love to stay and help them in any way I can. It reminds me on my days teaching in the school system and how satisfactory was witnessing students discover when they achieve a goal.

Nov 9, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

The designers gave updates of their work. Wagaman was absent today, but we scheduled next Friday to meet and listen to all the sounds. Anderson showed how the statues are going. Benson announced that we have plenty of Greek masks to use on the transitions. I suggested that if they all can be Greek goods, we can highlight the way the gods change the setting and control Atreus. Bernhagen had some ideas for Hermes's exit light effect but will be able to play with it when we are in the Andrea's theatre and he

sees the scene. I remind them that they were all invited to see the rehearsals at any time they want. Anderson showed the shirt final idea. He said did not find any line of the text to add at the bottom of the image, so he decided to keep “MSU Mankato” in Greek language at the beneath the image. Is not what I would prefer, but I do like that the idea is getting done by the team and it looks good. By the end of the week, Benson will present a final model of the shirt so we can start building the order and gather the money for all who wants it. I know I will buy mine.

Nov 9, 2020 Rehearsal 6:00 pm

I started thirty minutes before schedule to be able to assist Christian Tesch on his blocking and characterization. He was online, keeping distance from possible Coronavirus exposure and now he is back. We also had today McKenna Prill, who was helping *The Tempest* production covering one of their actors with Coronavirus. It was good to have them back and work with them to keep them updated. One of the main actors talked to me in private before we started and told me that he was very sorry, but he was still working with the memorization. I appreciate that he apologized because he recognized he had a responsibility to the group. I also understood that he was living a personal situation and dealing with some pressure. It's my responsibility to keep a healthy environment for my actors so I made sure he will not have a crisis because of that. He has been very responsible. I told him he could stay relax doing what all he could today, and that I trust he will memorize it soon. In general, we had time to work the three scenes in Thyestes's house. Since a few actors did not have complete

memorization, the first time they ran it after we polished it was not so good, but the second time, after some notes, they did a much better job.

Nov 10, 2020 Rehearsal 6:00 pm

I started early again at 6:00 pm to work with Jacob Haen's blocking and interpretation. Haen join us after many days absent working the sound with *The Tempest* production. Since this is the first time we work on the scene, I gave him general notes and recommendations to do with his character. I emphasized that he should lower the tone of his voice and reflect upon the backstory that motivates his actions in this scene. The next time we work on his scene, I will see what ideas he brings for his character. Then, I will give him more details to work with. Besides Haen's rehearsal, we had to cancel the official group rehearsal because the main two actors, Siglin and Feist, could not make it. They were trapped in their homes because of the huge amount of snow. I decided to postpone this act's rehearsal to next Sunday. I'm glad that we have some emergency rehearsal days for cases like this.

Nov 11, 2020 Scene shop 1:00 pm

I had the opportunity to work with the chariot for Atreus as part of my scene shop hours. What could have been a great day ended up being the worst of all my experiences so far. During the process of making the cart, I made some suggestions to Zietse since I know what I need and how I will use it. We worked together on the cart and everything was great until Anderson saw it. I noticed my help was not appreciated. My suggestions

were taken as an insult to the Anderson's creativity and a lack of trust. Once again, I'm not having much luck with Anderson, and I will have to talk to him about it. In general, designers need to communicate their decisions before building anything and verify if directors approve their ideas to avoid wasting time, materials and money on something that might not be useful. As a director, I don't like to wait until the end of the process to build or test anything because it limits the possibility of having something more useful. I prefer to do something about it as soon as possible and have time to explore.

Nov 11, 2020 Rehearsal 6:00 pm

Today I started working with an actress that was the last member of the cast that was rehearsing on Zoom because of Coronavirus. We blocked and reviewed her scenes, and she was ready to rehearse later with the whole group. When the group arrived, we rehearsed Act Two completely. The rehearsal went well, and I gave notes. It is great to work with all members of the cast at the same time. Not so long ago, that was something we were used to do and people in theatre were very strict about it. Since Coronavirus, everybody has had no choice but to be flexible. Many might not like it, but otherwise, they probably cannot do any theatre at all.

Nov 12, 2020 Meeting with Technical Advisor 2:00 pm

I had a casual conversation with Grubb, and we addressed the situation that happened yesterday with Anderson. It was an interesting dialog in which we discussed our different points of view about my approach to the designers as a director. It was very

frustrating knowing that the things he said I should do were the same things I've been trying to do all along, but apparently, I have not been effective with Anderson. The three areas we talked about were: tell the designers what I want, be flexible, and work as a team member. I'm very aware of the importance of all that, but apparently the style I've been using is not the one they are used to. I'm glad we talked about it and clarified the events.

Nov 12, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

I felt exhausted today before we even started the rehearsal, but I breathed deeply and went in with energy and motivation. Ironically, Coronavirus struck again. When we thought that everything improved, things just get worse. Today, two actors had to be online because they were exposed to someone with Coronavirus. Another was not feeling well either and she was online too. We ended up with three actors online and three in-person. We had to do what we could with what we had. It was not a great rehearsal because the online actors didn't have an appropriate space to rehearse and the connection with the in-person actors was limited by the non-physical actions between them. For the online actors, I had to focus only to the lines. We ran the Prologue and Act One. The first time we did it, they lost the connection between the characters on many occasions. I gave some comments to make them conscious of the problem and it was much better the second time. Sadly, we might have to keep working with actors online during the next days, but that's the better choice to keep developing the scenes.

After the rehearsal, I worked with Inga to help her continue develop her character. I've been noticing she has been struggling again in her process. It's been getting her frustrated and I made myself available to assist her. We mainly explored her rhythm and the possibilities of tones on her voice to help her differentiate the evolution of her character during the play. During Act 1, her voice and physical reactions need to be more alert, worried, unsecure, and nervous. Then, when her character acquires more experience, she can show a more mature, controlled, and wise woman. We managed to get her more into her character and she felt better. She is a great actress and I hope she keeps increasing her confidence.

Nov 13, 2020 Meeting with Sound Designer 11:00 am

Wagaman showed me all the sound selections he had so far, and we discussed them. It was a great interaction. As a director, I could verify that he was in the right path and confirmed that almost all of the sounds could be used in the play. He clarified some doubts, and it gave him more confidence and relief in his process. It was a nice conversation, efficient and not rushed. It took us more than one hour. That's why I don't prefer to discuss these things with the whole team because I don't want them to feel they are wasting their time. Same thing happens when I work with actors. If I need to work too much time individually with one actor, I don't call all of them just to watch and wait. Either I call the actor before the regular rehearsal, after it or at some other time we both can. Now that Wagaman and I discussed his sound plot, I recommended that he shows in our next group meeting some samples of the sounds to the team to listen to any reaction

about them. That way we can all be on the same page. I particularly mentioned that some of the sounds he can show are the ones in where special light effects needed to be closely involved. Some of those effects are the rising of the sun, the lambs, and Hermes's exit.

Nov 13, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

In today's rehearsal, we ran Act Three twice. Two actors did not come but were excused. Another two actors were online because of COVID and one of the main characters will be online one more week. I'm getting used to the online and in-person interaction, but I still don't like it. It's a harder process for everybody because the actors have limitation in their homes. They can't project as much or have the physical interaction with their partners. I appreciate that they are working the best they can and improving with the notes I give.

If Coronavirus was not an issue it would have been an amazing rehearsal. With all the actors together on stage the energy would have been even greater. However, I can't complain, it was a good rehearsal and I saw huge improvements in several characters. Oetken found a good voice for her character, Pythia. Inga also found a good voice for Syneida for her Act Three scenes. Both need to keep working on them, but I'm glad they discovered a vocal style that works because they were struggling with it. It's a natural process for the actors. The important thing is that they keep exploring until they get it, and it should help them feel more confident in their process.

Nov 15, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Today we worked Act Four and the Epilogue. We barely worked this part, but now that most of the lines are memorized, the actors managed to play it well. Siglin was online and had the common online limitations of projection, rhythm, and intensity, but we discussed what needs to be done. When Siglin comes back in-person we'll need to work the physical transitions to show how Atreus acts impulsively for the last time and how he managed to control himself and is willing to change. For the Epilogue, I presented the idea of having the gods watching in the back and on each entrance. It will be a strong image that I will also use during the Prologue. That way, the play will show visually how the gods see and surround mortals. Also, since the gods will do the set changes, it will show how they control and change the characters' circumstances to manipulate their actions. I just hope the Greek masks are ready and that at least some of them look like gods.

Nov 16, 2020 Production Meeting 8:00 am

Today, was our last production meeting of the year. Everybody should be on hold for next Monday in case we need to do an emergency meeting, but the designers said they will not have any particular update and I don't want to make them lose their time. Also, we will probably have one more meeting in January to give quick updates and resolve any last-minute issue. Designers showed their last updates, and I asked specifically for certain things that I haven't seen yet. Wagaman showed some music to give everyone a better perspective of how the play will sound. Anderson commented that the marble

painting process had started. Benson said that Lindsey's purple costume needed to be changed, but the rest were found.

I discussed the idea about having the gods during the Prologue, Epilogue and transitions of scenes. It might require the interaction of a few technical areas to make their image impressive. A prop will be added to each important god, and lighting needs to illuminate the gods' positions into consideration during Atreus's Prologue and Epilogue. At the end, I talked with Hamilton about what had happened in the past days and she understood my actions and supported my decisions. I appreciate her concern in my process and I understand that we are all different and have different approaches. I am glad that, even though there are things to improve, we all had good intentions and look for how to create the best play we can.

Nov 16, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

At last, we used the Andreas theatre to rehearse. I was very excited to be in the official space and, once the basic platforms of the set are on tomorrow, it will help me confirm if I need to change some of the blocking. Tonight's rehearsal was on Act Four and the Epilogue. The most important note was related to intensity and rhythm. It's hard to react to the other actor if someone is on Zoom, but it is possible, and that was what I was aiming for. Since we have to adapt and go online with some actors, everybody needs to rely more on the voice and imagination of actions to be able to react accordingly. If we keep that intensity and the rhythm, when all actors are on stage, it will feel better for everybody. On another subject, Sam Verdick was also helping on *The Tempest* as an

understudy and now he joined our team officially. I talked to him, gave him some ideas, and he accepted to work on the official image to use on the poster of the play *Atreus*.

Nov 17, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

I thought we were getting better with the Coronavirus situation, but we were not. Today, one of the actors announced he had Coronavirus. Luckily, he was feeling good, and he didn't rehearse with anyone in the past few days. I recommended that the two actors that have a close scene with him get tested, just in case. They were online today and hopefully will be back soon. We rehearsed on the platforms on the set. It's exciting to see the set developing. We covered the Prologue and the first two acts. I planned to do two runs of the acts, but I preferred to use the time to work on some other important details: the addition of the gods, the logistic of the movements of the set, and talking about the possibility of understudies. The cast was open to work as understudies for other characters. We decided that an understudy would only perform if an actor cannot make the performance. I will bring an official understudy list tomorrow. The main idea will be that if an actor cannot do a performance, the understudy will do it and also do the characters that the actor normally has. Use the same actors in the group as understudies is good because we already discussed the play, and everyone is related to the process. I really hope they all can make it to the performance, but it's good to have another plan in case of an emergency because if we can't make it, the play will not be postponed, it will just be just cancelled.

Nov 18, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Today more persons were added to Zoom. The Coronavirus cases are increasing in the country and the University is starting to create new rules to encourage everybody to go fully online as soon as they can. As part of the new rules, there can't be any in-person presentations after Friday. We are not presenting yet, but if it gets worse, it may affect the three rehearsals we have after Friday. I hope they don't get cancelled. Those will be our only full rehearsals with most of the characters, including Atreus, before winter break. It was good that we finished establishing the blocking of the transitions between the scenes. Everyone knows how they should move and where it should go. Before the rehearsal, I saw Anderson and asked him directly about what ideas he had for the chariot since the one we made was dismantled. It was good that we talked because I had a clearer idea of what he was going to build, and it helped me adjust the blocking and decide how to do the transition movement with the chariot.

Nov 19, 2020 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Today, the University mandated the cancellation of all rehearsals and performances after Friday. This was the last rehearsal we will have until January. We started with technical problems, setting the camera to record the rehearsal. The good part was that at least we ran it completely for the first time. The bad part was that many actors were online, and I couldn't really appreciate how the play will look with everyone on stage. We recorded it to have the back up in case any actor needs it to review their

blocking, or any designer needs it to work on their ideas. However, with many actors online, that would only be partially beneficial, but it's better than having nothing.

These are crazy times and we've been working against many challenges. It's not the experience I was hoping to live, but I can't complain. We've been doing what we can and working as hard as possible. Looking at it from a positive perspective, we covered all blocking, worked plenty of intentions, assigned understudies, and did a partial full run at least once. If the actors don't forget their lines and blocking, we should be able to retake it on January, work on the rhythm, finish all the technical areas, and be ready to present on January 20 to 24.

When I finished today's rehearsal I stayed for a moment after everyone left and reflected about my experience. A part of me started remembering last years' experience when I had to cancel *Black Comedy* because Coronavirus started, and all productions were affected. I felt this could be it for our production. No more rehearsals and no presentation will be on stage for the rest of the season. Of course, this is not just another play, it's my play. It will not be an easy process if it gets cancelled, but if this is the end, at least, I'm satisfied that I have enjoyed the process and made sure to do all that I could to give a great experience to my team. I hope we can continue and have a wonderful closure, but only time will tell.

Jan 11, 2021 Production Meeting 8:00 am

Today was our last production meeting. I verified that everyone was clear with the dates for their area during this tech rehearsal week. Everyone gave their updates. All

seems to be running fine and there are just small details to work on the set and costumes. Benson will show her final designs and the masks tonight. I'm looking forward to seeing the mask selection to be able to distribute them and assign one of the twelve main gods to each mask for the actors to develop their poses accordingly. She will also bring the Atreus T-shirts. That can help to promote the play. Bernhagen has all the base programing of the lights finished and Wagaman is working on his speaker plot. A very important update was that so far, there is no need for understudies.

Jan 11, 2021 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

Some technical areas were more behind than I expected. The actors need some props to be able to rehearse and explore how to use them. Swords are essential for the combat and we still do not have any, not even fake ones with which to rehearse. The set painting centerstage was off center and created a distraction. The lighting effect for the lambs was not what I imagined, but it's the best choice we have. Bernhagen will see if he can work something else, but he is not sure there is another possibility. I hope the designs get completed soon.

Besides that, I was thinking on rehearsing with the understudies because everyone came back in-person today and feels healthy. Also, since we have less time to rehearse because of the cancellations last semester, I preferred to work with the main cast to see how the rehearsal goes. From what I saw, I decided to focus more on the main cast than work with the understudies. During the week, I'll verify if someone is not feeling well and make the call of rehearsing and use any understudy.

Jan 12, 2021 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

The University made some adjustments to our email accounts and we fell behind in preparing the computer to be able to record the rehearsal and to allow Heather to see it on Zoom. She was going to watch the play and give me feedback as my advisor. After we finished setting the computer, we ran the play. It was the first time that we rehearse with all actors in-person. The rehearsal took more time than normal to be able to finish the run. Some actors need to work on their memorization, but it was better than I expected. Overall, it was a better rehearsal than yesterday. We have to correct the rhythm, but the actors are doing a great job. I keep giving notes because I understand they can continue to improve or because they have lost something they had. The total run time for the play was like two and a half hours. I think we can get it down to two hours if we work the transitions faster. I noticed acts three and four are the ones that needs more rehearsal. Therefore, tomorrow we will do a small change in the agenda. We will just rehearse acts three and four. That way, we also can have time for the publicity pictures and do a combat session with the actors since we finally received the swords.

Jan 13, 2021 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

We started with Corrie Eggimann taking the publicity pictures. Then, we rehearsed acts three and four. The rehearsal was much better. I focused on bigger aspects like rhythm, mood, intensity, and the functionality of the blocking with the new set elements, and not so much on details of the actor's character interpretations. I know I

tend to pay a lot of attention to details because there is always something actors can improve upon, but at this moment, we are so close to our opening night that the bigger aspects are key to do a successful play. We also rehearsed the sword fights and, from now on, we will have a fight call 30 minutes before we start rehearsing.

Jan 14, 2021 Rehearsal 7:00 pm

Today's rehearsal went great too. We started with the fight call and we polished the blocking using the swords. Some actors still need to rehearse more with their swords to control them better. I'm sure they will get better within the next few days. In general, the actors managed to repeat all the moves effectively. Then, it was the lighting and sound technical rehearsal. We decided to just do a run thru, and I'll give notes to the designers during the rehearsal. That way, at the end, I just give a couple of main notes to the actors, and Wagaman can record the townspeople sound that he wanted to include.

Jan 15, 2021 Rehearsal 6:30 pm

We did another technical rehearsal. More cues were corrected, and others still need to be fixed. We used the same system as yesterday to give notes to designers. We were seated close to each other and I talked to them directly during the rehearsal. That way, the designers didn't have to stay after rehearsal and the actors didn't have to wait to get theirs.

The costume rehearsal ended up being moved to Sunday instead of tomorrow because a message was sent incorrectly. I preferred to do the costume rehearsal on

Saturday because if many changes are needed, it could be complicated for the lack of time. However, since Morgan needed the time, I understood the preference and agreed with the decision.

As for the rehearsal, the intensity was down, and the rhythm got slower. Also, some transitions needed to be faster. It still was interesting to see, but because the play is very long, the audience might get tired. The actors were conscious of this and will work on it.

Jan 16, 2021 Rehearsal 7:00 pm

Today we did a full run. Act Two rhythm got slower, but the rest of the play kept a nice active rhythm. We ran the sounds and lights. There are a few moments to fix, but mainly details. In general, they look great. Also, we used several costume elements that helped actors work their interpretations. I think the show is almost ready to be presented. All we need to verify are the costumes tomorrow.

Jan 17, 2021 Rehearsal 7:00 pm

Today was our dress rehearsal. The energy in the play was great. The costumes added an extra vibe to the performance. I gave notes to designers and actors emphasizing on composition and rhythm. Some actors tend to change blocking organically and, as long as they flow with the idea of the character in the composition, I flow with them. However, sometimes they just change it because of a mistake, and I just want to make

sure it was a mistake and not a new blocking proposal from them. I can say we are ready to present the play and I'm very excited about it.

Jan 19, 2021 Previews Night 7:00 pm

During the day, I had two interviews to promote the play, one for TV and one for a newspaper. The interviewer of The Reporter newspaper, Jenna Peterson, was excited and wanted to also talk with the actors about their experience doing the show. It was a great opportunity to promote the play. Then, the moment of truth just arrived. We started the previews night performance. The vibe was amazing. There were a couple of bloopers, but the actors managed to fix them. That is part of the risks and excitement of doing live theatre. We only had 12 people in the audience, but the reactions were enough to show the actors they were engaged with the play.

Once the play was over, the feedback was great too. One audience member even mentioned that that was the best play she saw at the university. That means a lot because I consider all the plays our theatre department do have great quality. It's good to know the play is reaching the audience. Also, since it's a contemporary approach of a classic myth, it can wake up or reinforce in the audience interest in the wonderful ancient Greek stories.

Jan 20, 2021 Performance 7:30 pm

Today was finally our opening night. It was an amazing performance again. I just gave a few notes individually to some actors, but the play flowed greatly. We had 26

people in the audience. It may not seem as much considering the amount of seats the theatre has, but the theatre could also have been empty. It's admirable that 26 persons decided to support and enjoy the play even though COVID is still a problem. Also, that's more audience than yesterday and the feedback was great. They all were amazed and excited by the play. My goal with the audience was achieved. If we get more people in audience during the next performances, the vibe will even be greater, and the actors will feel it more.

A different approach for the promotion of our shows is needed. We need to get the community more involved as audience members. That is a common challenge, but the department just takes it as a normal situation. I understand they tried several ideas, but the problem still needs to be fixed. We need to keep searching for solutions.

With COVID that goal is more difficult than ever, but if people are used to coming to plays, they'll still come if we keep them engaged. All theatre people will prefer to see a theatre full rather than empty. We need to make watching theatre a hobby. Promote more online and in person, analyze how we can get to new people, do research on tactics, analyze what this new generation would like to see, establish connection with other departments, schools, churches and many other places than can serve as publicity. When the shows get sold out, then, we can set that as the norm.

Jan 21, 2021 Performance 7:30 pm

A total of 15 audience members came today and they gave the same positive feedback about the play. Also, at the end of the play, we did the production photos. I

made a list of more than 80 possible pictures but ended up doing like 40 because our target was only one to one and a half hours of photo session. The members of the cast were very professional and helped with the process. Corrie Eggimann was taking the pictures with Victoria K. Finger, a PR photo student. I know the photo process can be tedious, but at the end, the result was a beautiful gallery of the scenes of the play that can last with is forever. It's worth it.

I have been recording the play every day because no one knows which one will be the best to keep. Today, I decided to record the play from one side and because the camera did not cover all the area, I had to move it during the whole play to get nice shots of the scenes. That made me not appreciate so much the performance because I had to be attending the camera. It would be great if the department officially assigned someone to do it. It will be even better if the department elaborates a better technique to record them, especially now that many people can't see it in person because of Coronavirus. The camera recording from one far spot is not the best way to appreciate the play.

Jan 22, 2021 Performance 7:30 pm

We broke our audience record with 33 persons today. I recorded the play from the house right to have a different perspective of the play. When I saw yesterday's recording, I noticed that since the camera does not take all the space, I have to move the camera a lot and it was not so pleasant to watch. I decided to shoot it from the other side, but from a seat that didn't require so much camera motion. As for the actors and technicians, they keep doing a wonderful job and the feedback is still great.

Jan 23, 2021 Performance 2:00pm and 7:30 pm

Today we presented two performances. It's like a test of fire for the actors. They did impressive work in both. Siglin and Feist also felt a great energy today, especially during the second performance because the audience was more active. Ironically, the first performance had 25 people in the audience and the second had 22. It was a snowy day, and normally that slows the ticket sales. We decided that I will send the second performance video to the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival's responder.

Something that I don't like is when actors cut important lines and that happened today. They cut some and Thyestes didn't say, "will you surrender your soul". That is an essential line to give more impact in the development of Thyestes struggle, but I understand that sometimes a line gets cut and they have to retake the dialog as they can to keep the show running. I can't believe there is only one performance left tomorrow. Then, the journey of the presentations will be over and the last intense adventure about *Atreus*, of getting my Thesis ready, will resume.

Jan 24, 2021 Performance 2:00 pm

Today was the last presentation. I'm filled with excitement. I was happy that all performances were presented, and that all actors made it without the need of understudies. I would like to keep presenting the play around the country and create the same reactions we received during all of our performances. As some random member of

the audience said to me, “the play is an instant classic.” I need to work on some details I want to edit, and then, will be ready to be published. I have many ideas to present the story. I would like to see it as a comic, short series, anime and even a movie, but I’ll take one step at a time and for now, just enjoy all we achieve with this wonderful production.

Jan 31, 2021 Response by KCACTF 6:30 pm

The faculty registered the play on January 16 to receive a response from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. We had a delightful response of the play over Zoom by Jayna Fitzsimmons. She did a detailed observation of the play and was delighted about how well everything was mixed together. She praised the story, the designers and the performance. Something that she highlighted was the evidence of the good theatrical deeds with directors and actors working as a team for the common good. She loved the play and was very excited talking about it, and we loved that all our effort was appreciated with so much passion.

CHAPTER IV

POST-PRODUCTION ANALYSIS

I've directed many plays I've written, but this is my first experience writing and directing in English. It's also the first time I worked with a university cast and crew to create it. I am really grateful for the opportunity the department gave me. No other play would have satisfied me more than what I felt when I saw *Atreus* on stage. Nevertheless, not everything during the experience was a delightful situation. There were some unexpected and challenges events, especially with the current world crisis with COVID.

Definitely, the worst part of this process was having to deal with COVID. Being afraid of getting infected and sensing sadness and a low mood because of what was going on around us, not knowing if the play gets cancelled or if the audience would even dare to come, were some of the challenges we had to deal with to be able to present *Atreus*. It was not a comfortable situation, but we not only survived it; we succeeded in every way. As part of the safety protocol, the actors used facial masks, kept distance on stage, and avoided contact between themselves. All of this interfered in their natural acting process, but it was all for the benefit of everyone. We were simply not used to it. However, it did not limit the actors as they worked around it. I visualized it as an acting exercise and set my mind as an opportunity to be creative to overcome the challenges. I am normally used to other types of challenges related to budget, concepts or actor training, but there can always be something new to learn. Having actors online to rehearse is a clear

example. I could either have been frustrated or seen it as a new approach to rehearsing. At the end, it's about life choices, and I applied *Atreus*'s main message. I did not let the circumstances manipulate me. I did not lose focus or hope and kept working hard to do the best production possible.

An online rehearsal was not the best way to work the play, but it was better than not having the actors at all. It was a possibility that worked during the emergencies that I didn't even consider before. If we go back to "normal," I will definitely prefer to do in-person rehearsals, but now I have another tool to play with. I worked with what I had and did not suffer or complain about the things I didn't. I also understood the consequences of the changes in the rehearsal dynamic and was watching any possible struggles anyone could have. I want everyone to be efficient, but also happy with the process. To help the cast and the crew, I stayed empathic, flexible and open to suggestions.

Besides COVID, there were no major challenges during the production. Some small setbacks did occur, but they served as teachable moments. Working on some of the designs contributed to those moments. We explored the limits of the costume in a contemporary style but remembered to keep it classic to be consistent with the other designs. Also, I suggested ideas to work with props, but I understand not everyone likes to receive suggestions because it might be seen as imposition. I know teams have different working styles and, once I learned the style of mine, I adapted myself to it. I'm always in disposition to help, but I didn't want to bother or get in the way of anyone. I prefer to just go with the flow with any unexpected events.

Some of those teachable moments occurred during the rehearsals, too. One of my main tasks as a director is deciding all the blocking of the play, but I am also flexible with the actor's creative process. I love to explore their suggestions and work with them to see what can be effective and comfortable for the actor. Ryan Feist was an actor that loves to explore and constantly changed his blocking. Most of the time it worked and if for any reason it didn't, we just talked about it and made clear that it needs to be changed. Normally, not all the actors worked that way. During *Atreus* rehearsals, some actors made changes and it was clear that it was not on purpose. They just seem lost in the space. In those cases, I approached the actor regarding the change and when there was no justification behind the move, I used it as a great opportunity to review the blocking with the actor.

Something that I realized was that I needed to establish the correct pronunciation of the names of characters and places of the play. In Spanish, the accentuation system and the constant sounds of the vowels makes easy to pronounce any of the names in Spanish. In English, the situation is more complex. The vowels have multiple possible sounds depending on the words they are part of. I have a Spanish accent and I knew I was not the best to model a correct pronunciation for any word in English. I worked with one of the actors, Seth Honerman, and developed a formal pronunciation recording. All the actors had access to the recording, and it help to establish a norm to pronounce each word. As long as everyone pronounced each name the same way, I was good with it. Basically, all they have to do is listen to other actors and make sure they do the same pronunciation. During rehearsals, some actors pronounce the names differently and I

encourage them to review the recording. More than the pronunciation, the actors asked me to clarify some character's background information in relation to the play, but I was always on my best disposition to work with them individually.

Everything flowed naturally and the actors and designers in general were also in their best disposition to work with any idea I came up with. I worked with that flow during the whole process, and during rehearsals, I decided to include all twelve gods of Olympia as symbolic characters. It was a visual and practical decision with several purposes. It worked as a powerful picture for the Prologue and the Epilogue. Also, having the actors putting on the masks to represent the gods while moving the set as an ensemble added symbolism that reinforced the idea of the gods' manipulation of the setting.

When I wrote the play, I decided to not include a chorus to keep the realistic style of my vision. However, now I see the chorus element of the tragedies represented in two ways. Initially, I always saw Syneida as the voice and purpose of the chorus stating her view of what a king should be, and the hopes that harmony and peace return to the royal family. Also, she followed Atreus in his journey until she could bear to witness no more. Now, with the addition of all the gods, I saw a physical representation of the chorus. When I reflected on it, I imagined I could have added the gods in small groups to directly witness each scene. Even Hermes could have break away from a small group and include himself in his scene with Atreus. Adding groups and moving them as one ensemble would have help established more the physical presence of a chorus and would have help maintain the constant presence of the gods. On the other hand, it might have ended up

being very distracting and, since we have to keep distance between the actors because of COVID, the limited space would have been a problem. Maybe that's an idea to develop once the distancing restriction ends. A bigger cast will also be useful because there are some scenes when most of the actors are in and the group of gods would have been very small and not consistent.

Since I wrote the play, I was very clear with what I want to see from each character. In general, the actors quickly understood what I expected from them. In some cases we worked most specifically on the voice and others on the body and others was a mix of it. That was the case when I worked on the character Syneida. It took longer to achieve, not because the actress was doing a bad performance, but because I wasn't getting the different effects I wanted from the character. Initially, she was creating a more temperate personality and tended to blend, up to the point of hiding herself among rest of the characters. I was looking for a sparkle to highlight her from the rest because the character is not a common character. Syneida is one of the most important characters of the play. It's the only character that has a proper name that is not a real character in history. She represented Atreus's conscious. She also represented the chorus by being the "ideal spectator." That is one of the functions of the chorus in the ancient Greek plays. The chorus responds as we want the audience to respond. I could have chosen to just let the actress keep what she was doing, and it would have been a good performance, but I knew the actress could reach my expectations. I kept working with her until she did it, and it was very pleasing to see her enjoying her achievement.

Every time I read or see one of my plays performed, I wonder how I can make it better. With *Atreus* it was not different. I edited as many lines and situations as possible before I presented the script to the actors. I did not want to make them waste time memorizing lines that they would not use or adding new lines once they were already memorized. In spite of that, there can always be essential information that might be necessary to edit. When that happened during our rehearsals, I didn't dictate the changes. Instead, I invited the actor to examine the edits I wanted to make, and we reached an agreement upon it. I also noticed that I might need to add a moment of reflection after Atreus kills Chrysippus. It will probably be a short dialog between Atreus and Thyestes to help show that the killing was an accident caused by Atreus's impulsiveness. It might help keep the audience on Atreus's side for more time, but this will be a task for another production. I thought about it too late during rehearsals and I did not want to overwhelm the actors with last minute changes; especially, since they did not express any inconvenience during that scene.

One last aspect I want to comment about the production is the moment of sadness I felt with all the empty seats during the performances. I think it's a problem that needs to be attended to. It's essential for the survival and prosperity of the art and serves as a common entertainment and educational option for the community. It cannot continue to be accepted as a norm that the studio shows are normally empty. I hope the administration coordinates with the faculty, students and the rest of the community to develop solutions for that problem. Learning what to do to get new audience can also be included in our preparation in theatre, like in theatre management class. It can even be an

independent credit for students that organize and develop a new promotion system. To help in this process, I participated on a television news segment and a newspaper interview. Besides that, I encouraged and worked with my team to create t-shirts with the name and image representing the play. Also, as a symbolic gift to all members of the production, I gave them a mask with the name of the play. The t-shirts and the masks were a way to promote the play, and more importantly, to solidify our identity as a community.

In conclusion, I feel I fulfilled all stated goals in my direction of the play *Atreus*. It was not an easy task, but we managed to work everything out and presented a wonderful production. The support and advice we received during the whole process helped me maintain the courage to face any difficulty. I am more than happy with the result and the positive feedback from professors, students, family, and community in general. We had great reviews from The Reporter newspaper and Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival responder. I'm grateful for all the hard work the actors and production team put together to make the play possible. I hope everyone that was part of it will treasure the moment and remember the experience with love.

CHAPTER V

PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

During these last three years studying for a Master of Fine Arts in Directing at Minnesota State University, Mankato, I had the opportunity to expand my knowledge about different theatre areas. I have been able to approach all of them from the perspective of a theater director. For years, I have been immersed in the educational process of teaching theater in schools. Now, the constant experience I've had here of directing at this higher level has helped me to better understand the process of the director and improved my theater skills.

The theatre directing field can be divided into Art and Craft. They are two quite related aspects that tend to get mixed, but there is a difference that I was able to establish during the Theater Criticism class with the professor Heather Hamilton. In general, Art is a creative expression about a concept based on emotions, feelings and vision. It depends on the artist's intent and the viewer's emotional response from the work. On the other hand, Craft is a form of work creating a physical object by using hand and brain. It requires skill and technique to master it. The Craft in directing is related to how the director manages all the areas he or she supervises and operates to achieve the creation of the play. The director can feel and understand the essence of the story to do justice to the author's intention. The director's job is to make that vision shine through the scenes. At

the end, the play will show the result of the mix between the director's Art and Craft.

Therefore, both areas need to be trained in order to be a successful director.

The training the university has offered me covered both areas of Art and Craft. The courses I took can be divided into specific courses about directing and courses about other theatrical areas where I was able to do my work from the point of view of a director. Knowing the processes of other theatrical areas helped me to better visualize the possibilities of the designs. It reinforced how I can establish real expectations of what to ask the designers and how to communicate and assist them better. Each situation is unique, but this experience helped him to be more prepared to face a variety of events.

From the courses specifically about directing, I took Director & Designer Communication Seminar, Advanced Directing Methods 1, Advanced Directing Methods 2 and three Project Practicums in directing. In the seminar, I designed all the areas of various plays to communicate and propose my visions as a technician to the director of each play. In the other courses, I had the opportunity to direct short scenes and explore the director's job with different scripts. I also directed two full plays, *Brainpeople* by José Rivera and *Atreus* written by me. I was going to direct *Black Comedy* by Peter Shaffer during my second year, but it was canceled due to the Coronavirus situation. However, I did complete the concept and analysis of the play even though it wasn't performed. Now I have all the information ready to direct it in the future. Having the opportunity to perform *Atreus* was a dream come true. I loved when I staged it with school students, and I always knew that I was going to direct it in a higher educational level. Eventually, I hope I can take it to the professional theatre world.

The courses that focused on theatrical areas, other than directing, have helped me to learn new techniques, to better understand the work that is done in those areas, and to understand my role as a director in relation to them. Those courses can be divided into courses for actors, designers, and general theater. Acting courses such as Advanced Acting Techniques, Stage Combat, Theatre Speech 1, Theatre Speech 2, Theatre Styles, and Voice Lessons helped me as a director to develop his skills to work directly to the actors. I explored many possible uses of the body and voice that can help an actor in the process of creating a character. It will not only help me when I direct plays, but also in the acting related courses I want to eventually teach.

For the design courses, I took Scene Design, Sound Design, Costume Design and Lighting Design. The Playwriting and Independent Study in Translation courses can also be included from a process point of view when designing the story. These courses have helped me as a director, to know each area more thoroughly and to experience the conceptualization and creation of my own designs. By studying them further, I broadened my horizons in relation to the possibilities I can explore in stage directing and emphasized that, although I have initial ideas for any design, I should not limit myself to them. I must always be open to suggestions from the designers and analyze the possibilities. When I designed during the courses, I always analyzed my ideas taking into account the possibility of someday directing it. All the plays I designed during this process will enter to my list of plays to direct in the future.

General theater courses, such as Theater Management, Theatre History 1, Theatre History 2, Theory and Criticism, and Research Methods, invited me to learn and analyze

about what has happened in the art of theatre over time. In addition, they helped me determine what I need to achieve to establish and run an efficient and successful theater. As a director, this information is important because it helps me understand the evolution of theatre, learn from the way other theatres survived their struggles, and apply the knowledge in a creative and innovative way. I can also use it as reference with my actors.

Beside the courses I took, I have been able to continue training myself as an educator. I have been offering courses, workshops, and teaching days where a professor puts me in charge of a whole group, and I have been responsible for teaching particular material of a topic related to theater. In addition, I evaluated theater undergraduates in various areas of courses. I faced those responsibilities with courage and passion. However, when I started my first year, I was full of doubts due to my inexperience in handling the English language.

Managing English has been one of the great challenges I encountered. I had never taken or offered a class in English before I started the master's degree. It was a frustrating transition, but I didn't give up. I knew that I had to make great sacrifices leaving my job, family, friends, and even my country to be able to have a better future. Basically, I started a new life with my head full of concerns. It hasn't been easy, but now, I'm almost done and determined to finish it.

Another challenge I had was catching up with material that I had not reviewed for years. During the courses, in general, I remembered there was information that I discussed in my bachelor's degree or my first master's degree but never made greater use of it and, therefore, I forgot it. I understand that once I organize the specific data needed

to create my future courses, I will constantly review it and don't forget about it. Because of that, I really appreciate the lists of Professor Paul J. Hustoles because I know I'm also a person that loves to organize information in lists and they will be very useful.

A challenge that I had many times is that I tend to be perfectionist. I do not settle for simply getting the job done. I usually analyze the situations from different perspectives and get very involved in the details in order to carry out the best possible work in the time available. Ironically, I like to turn in jobs as fast as I can to be able to start others and not get behind on work. On many occasions, I felt that I did not have time to do all the assignments and felt overwhelmed. Normally, I am willing to stop fixing the assignment as soon as I feel it's good enough, but it was hard to just stop fixing it if a professor was severe in grading it. Despite wanting to maintain a healthy routine, I lost many hours of sleep to finishing my assignments on time because I felt there was always something that I could do better. This made me feel behind in comparison to others because I perceived that many colleagues managed to get the job done easily and quickly. However, I was satisfied with my performance and know that I did my best effort. Such is the behavior I expect from my teammates and from my students, to do the best they can and feel good with their effort. Therefore, I feel I have the duty to reciprocate in the same way.

In general, I am pleased with the preparation I am receiving in my master's degree. Now that it will end soon and can reflect on what I did. I think that there are other experiences that I would wish I could have done.

In terms of directing, I am happy with the amount of practice I had. I directed in the classroom and in the Andreas Theater. I did not direct in the Ted Paul Theatre or in an open area such as the lobby or outside the building, but it would have been great to explore the benefits and disadvantages of directing on those spaces. The good thing is that, in the Andreas Theater, I was able to explore different audience configurations. I used the court seating for *Brainpeople*, started exploring the side proscenium seating for *Black Comedy* and finish my last directing project using deep thrust seating for *Atrous*.

It is likely that several of the courses could be merged to create more specialized classes for directing or useful to amplify a director's skill range. An example of a new course could be a Directing for the Camera that helps broaden the director's perspective and the possibilities for using the camera in the directing process of a play. Also, maybe a course about Career Assistant to get us ready to get a future job. There we can create or improve our curriculum vitae, teaching and artistic philosophy statement, cover letter and a website with a digital portfolio. Also, we can prepare for interviews, teaching a sample class, and other details related to getting a job. I know Professor Daniel Stark offered help in those areas, but it can be offered as a class and all have the opportunity to learn from others' process and ideas.

Regarding my preparation as a teacher of various areas of theater, I am grateful for the opportunity to teach Acting for Everyone which I have been enjoying very much. I would have liked to have offered some other courses as well, specially related to directing. I know the different design areas needs help, and they appreciate the graduate students experience and discipline to work but teaching some extra classes would have

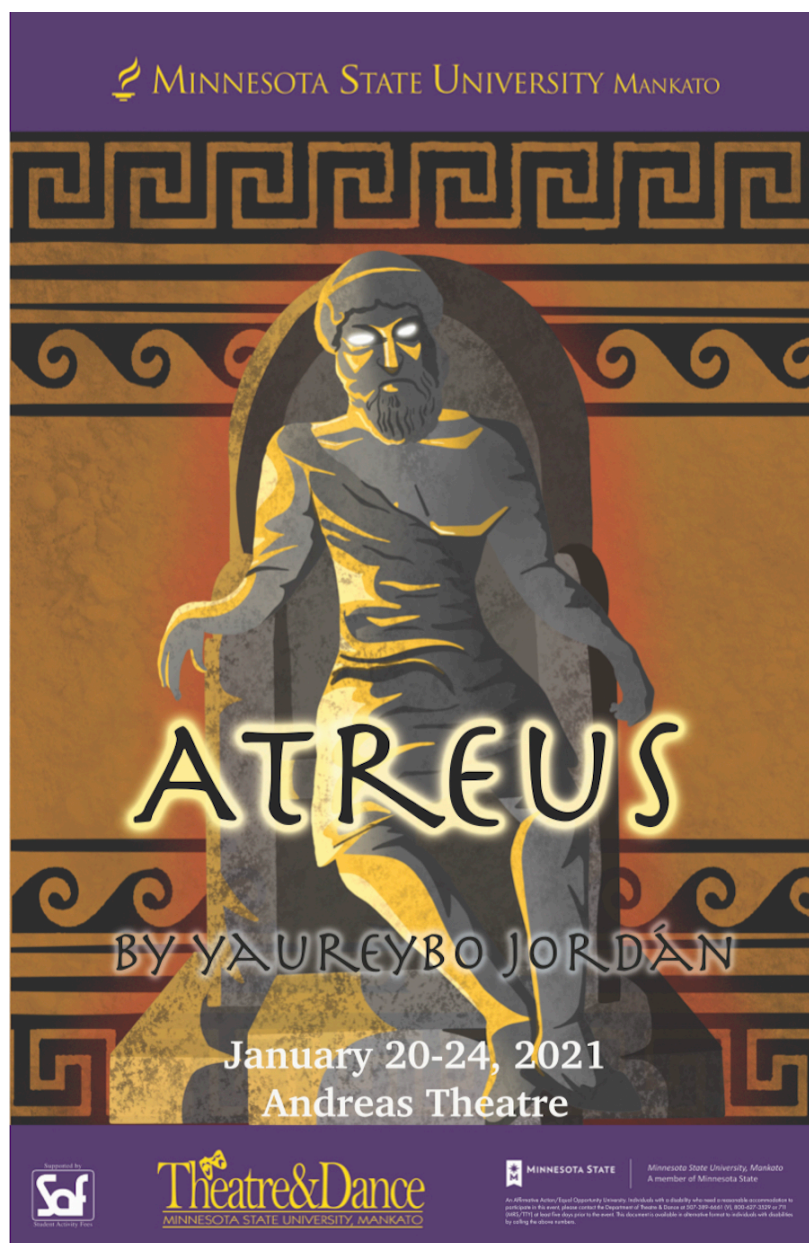
help me more in my goals. I did enjoy working in the scene shop and, because of particular circumstances, I had the opportunity to work on costume and prop area too. However, teaching a variety of classes, would have helped me develop further in the field of teaching assisted by experts in the specialty. Also, it would have been great to graduate with some courses ready to use when I teach in the future.

Something that I can't forget to mention, that really helped me during my three years, has been the support from my fellow graduate students. Trevor Belt, James Van Oort, Seth Honerman, Ty Hudson, and David Loudermilk were brothers to me in this process. In general, all interactions I develop with professors, graduate students and undergrads served me as encouragement to keep working. Since COVID, the interactions and community dynamics has been scarce. On top of that, with my particular situation where I decided to isolate myself the last semester for the safety of my wife's pregnancy, I felt the difference of energy to do any class work. It's not bad, but it's simply not the same. I am just focused on the classes and not having the complete educational experience. I miss it and I know the essence of it will serve me as an inspiration to develop a similar experience with my future coworkers.

In conclusion, it has been an intense process full of holistic enrichment that had helped me develop my directing skills. I have learned and enjoyed it as much as I could. Now, I recognize that Coronavirus remains active and threatening, but I expect to finish the MFA program soon and start a new chapter in my life. I hope I'll be able to teach, direct and help others as a professor with all the new information and experience I acquired.

APPENDIX A

PROMOTION FOR THE PLAY



Poster designed by San Verdick
Received a Publicity Poster Award from KCACTF 2021



Souvenir Mask designed by Morgan Benson



Shirt Concept designed by Scott Anderson

APPENDX B

ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUDITION!

PREPARE A 30-SECOND
CONTEMPORARY DRAMATIC
MONOLOGUE.

AUDITION DATE:
SEP/28/2020

&

PERFORMANCE DATE:
NOV/11-15/2020



"There are no heroes or villains, only the consequences of our actions."

Written and Directed by Yaureybo Jordán

ABOUT THE PLAY

A contemporary take on the Classical Greek tragedy, this is the story of Atreus and his unfortunate family curse. This mythic tale reveals the tragic pattern from which Atreus tries to escape, but by fate and the will of the gods, misery always pursues him.

CHARACTER INFO

(in order of appearance)

Act 1

ATREUS- Grows old during the play starting in his 10s. Prince of Pisa, Twin brother of Thyestes. Older son of Pelops. Tries to be respectful, fair and responsible. Started being playful and confident of his succession to the throne. Then, he lets himself get controlled by fear. He tries to do good but made some impulsive and drastic decisions during his life experiencing insanity. At the end of his life, he understood the cruel game of the gods. He regrets his actions and has decided to confront his new path without fear.

THYESTES- Grows old during the play starting in his 10s. Twin younger brother of Atreus. He is jealous of Atreus and feels like his shadow. During the progress of the story, he became more strategic and opportunistic and experiences madness. His desire for power increases and is willing to do whatever is necessary to be a King.

HIPPODAMIA- Early 40s. Strong, decided but cautious woman. Devoted mother of Atreus and Thyestes. Loves her children and despises her stepson. She feels hurt and betrayed by her husband's affair. Vengeance flows through her mind and is she willing to do terrible things to keep the kingdom and her heritage ruling.

SYNEIDA - Faithful family servant. Always honest, helpful, and polite. Grows old during the play starting in her 20s. Starts extremely obliging, obedient and silly and evolves to a more respected part of the family. She represents Atreus' conscience in the evaluation of his past actions.

PELOPS- Late 40s. Father of Atreus. King of Pisa. Responsible and caring father, perceptive, serious and severe.

CHRYSIPPUS- In his 10s. Son of Pelops. His stepmother, Hippodamia, does not want him to inherit the throne. He is arrogant, confident, egoistic, whining, cocky and fragile. He never shows any real interest for the throne, but his despicable personality ties him more to the conflict.

Act 2

AEROPE- Grows old during the play starting in her 20s. Attractive, friendly, nice and sensible. Wife of Atreus. She gets seduced and confused by Thyestes and mistrusts and betrays Atreus. Then, lives hidden and in fear trying to get ahead with her new family, but only finds agony when she gets discovered.

GUARD #1 and GUARD #2- Obedient. Serves the King of Mycenae. Respects Sthenelus.

STHENELUS- Once the King of Mycenae, now is a tired old man, but still wants the best for the kingdom. His son dies, and following an oracle, he makes Atreus and Thyestes decide on who would be the new King.

SHEPHERDESS- Young, humble, poor and recently widowed, wants to please the king.

LAMBS- 4. Bigger than the golden lamb. One will be sacrificed!

GOLDEN LAMB- A tiny lamb with golden fleece. It is the one promised to the gods in a sacrifice, but Atreus have better plans for it.

AGAMEMNON- Older son of Atreus. He argues with his brother, but the audience doesn't see him.

MENELAUS- Middle son of Atreus. He argues with his brother, but the audience doesn't see him.

PLEISTHENES- First a boy and then in his low 20s. Youngest son of Atreus. Born a prince but raised as a farmer by Thyestes and Aerope. He seeks vengeance with misinformation because Thyestes had been filling his head with hatred towards Atreus.

HERMES- Immortal. Messenger of the gods. He likes to see the Atreid brothers confront each other but he follows Zeus order and gives Atreus a message.

Act 3

CAPTAIN- Middle aged, obedient. Not too bright but had many years in the army. Faithful and grateful to Atreus and willing to follow any of his commands.

SOLDIER- Smart, young and feels comfortable criticizing everyone but is afraid of the king's retaliation.

SERVANT #1-Low 20s. Pleisthenes' servant. He follows instructions and is willing to renegotiate allegiance to save his life if threatened.

PELOPIA- 9 years old. Daughter of Thyestes. Sweet young girl. Love and trust her parents. She is autodidact and loves to write. When she got raped, she lost her innocence. When she gave birth, she loses the will to live.

AGLAUS- 8 years old. Older son of Thyestes. Like to be serene and in charge but is easy to get out of control.

ORCHOMENUS- 7 years old. Middle son of Thyestes. Active and strong. Loves to bother his brothers.

CALAEUS- 5 years old. Younger Son of Thyestes. Playful and naïve. Follow instructions, but with time he gets restless.

HEAD COOK- Big and attentive. Loves his job and comfort. Follow instructions always to please his King. Loves to gossip with Syneida.

SERVANT #2 and SERVANT #3- Atreus' servant. Obedient and obliging.

PYTHIA- High Priestess. Oracle of Delphi. Mysterious, occult, observant and calm. She has a clear perspective of life and understands the importance of her role as priestess.

AEGISTHUS- Late 10s. Son of Pelopia. Abandoned by his mother and raised by Atreus. He doesn't like to do lesser jobs unworthy of a prince, but respectful and is obedient to Atreus until Thyestes reveals his past. Acts impulsively and realizes his mistake after perpetrating the House of Atreus' course.

Act 4

GUARD #3- Young and strong. Atreus' guard. Fearless and loyal to Atreus.

PRELIMINARY PLAN with 10 actors (subject to change)

(NS) = Non-Speaking Character

#	Actor	Act1	Act2	Act3	Act4
1		ATREUS (BOY)	ATREUS	ATREUS	ATREUS
2		THYESTES (BOY)	THYESTES / AGAMEMNON (BOY'S VOICE)	THYESTES	THYESTES
3		SYNEIDA	SYNEIDA / MENE LAUS (BOY'S VOICE)	SYNEIDA	
4		HIPPODAMIA	SHEPHERDESS / PLEISTHENES (BOY'S VOICE)	ORCHOMENUS (BOY) / PYTHIA / HEAD COOK (NS)	
5		PELOPS	GUARD #1 ^(NS) / LAMB ^(NS)	SOLDIER	
6		CHRYSI PPUS (BOY)	GOLDEN LAMB ^(NS)	SERVANT #1 / CALAEUS (BOY)	
7			AEROPE	AEROPE / SERVANT #3 ^(NS)	
8			STHENELUS / LAMB ^(NS)	CAPTAIN	GUARD #3
9			GUARD #2 ^(NS) / LAMB ^(NS)	PELOPIA (GIRL) / SERVANT#2 ^(NS)	
10			LAMB ^(NS) / HERMES / PLEISTHENES (BOY'S BODY)	PLEISTHENES / AGLAUS (BOY)	AEGISTHUS



"There are no heroes or villains, only the consequences of our actions."

Written and Directed by *Yaureybo Jordán*

CAST

#	Actor	Act1	Act2	Act3	Act4
1	Ben Siglin	ATREUS (BOY)	ATREUS*	ATREUS*	ATREUS*
2	Ryan Joseph Feist	THYESTES (BOY)	THYESTES*	THYESTES*	THYESTES*
3	Emma I. Anderson	SYNEIDA*	SYNEIDA *	SYNEIDA *	
4	Lindsey Oetken	HIPPODAMIA		PYTHIA	
5	Allyson Bryson		SHEPHERDESS	CALAEUS (BOY)	
6	Seth Honerman	PELOPS		HEAD COOK(NL)	
7	Sam Smith		GUARD #1(NL)	SOLDIER	
8	Christian Tesch	CHRYSIPPUS	HERMES	AGLAUS (BOY)	
9	Isabella Fox		AEROPE	AEROPE*	
10	Daniel Walker		STHENELUS		
11	McKenna Prill			PELOPIA (GIRL)	
12	Zachary Gaulke		GUARD #2(NL)	CAPTAIN	
13	William Halloc		MENELAUS (BOY'S VOICE)	SERVANT #1 / ORCHOMENUS (BOY)	GUARD #3
14	Joaquin Warren		AGAMEMNON (BOY'S VOICE)	SERVANT #2(NL)	AEGISTHUS
15	Jacob Haen		PLEISTHENES	PLEISTHENES / SERVANT #3(NL)	

As always, it's not easy to select between so much talent but I hope you enjoyed the process.
¡Gracias a todos los que audicionaron!

Cast announcement

APPENDX C

PRODUCTION DOCUMENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">2020-2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MAINTAGE SEASON</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hair</i> October 14-18 & 21-25, 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Tempest</i> November 4-8 & 11-15, 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Angel Street</i> November 18-20, 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sense and Sensibility</i> February 17-21 & 24-28, 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mamma Mia!</i> April 7-11 & 14-18, 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;">STUDIO SEASON</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Silent Sky</i> October 9-11, 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Atreus</i> January 19-24, 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Desdemona: A Play About A Handkerchief</i> March 24-28, 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Next Fall</i> April 21-25, 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DANCE CONCERTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fall Dance Concert Online in December 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Spring Dance Concert April 30 & May 1, 2021</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THEATRE AND DANCE FACULTY AND STAFF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Scott Anderson Costumer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Matthew Caron Managing Director</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Corrie Eggimann Public Relations Director</p> <p style="text-align: center;">George Grubb Technical Director/Sound Design</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Beverly Gruenzner-Kragh Business/Office Manager</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Heather E. Hamilton Acting and Directing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Julie Kerr-Berry Chair, Department of Theatre and Dance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">David McCarl Costume Design</p> <p style="text-align: center;">John David Paul Scene Design</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vladimir Rovinsky Acting and Movement</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Steven Smith Lighting Design</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Daniel Stark Director of Dance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nicholas Wayne Musical Director</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY <small>MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO</small> </p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University. This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling the Department of Theatre and Dance at 507-389-6663 (V), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY).</small></p>	
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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It's always thrilling to make your own play take life on stage. By linking the stories of Atreus from a variety of sources, I was able to create a play fully focused on him and offer the audience access to a new tragedy about an old Greek myth.

Intertwining themes like destiny, gods, power, empathy, redemption, and faith, I present a play about Atreus' life. He is not the usual protagonist and may not be an ideal person, but frailty is human, and he wants to tell his story to whoever is willing to listen.

I thank the faculty for the opportunity to present the play as part of my thesis. I also thank the cast and crew for doing an amazing job bringing the story to life for the first time in the States.

Finally, I thank my wife for the help and support during the whole process even with our firstborn on the way! Oh, and his name is Tiago, not Aegisthus, just in case you were wondering.

Yaureybo Jordán

CAST

Atreus.....**Ben Siglin**
 Thyestes.....**Ryan Joseph Feist**
 Syneida.....**Emma Inga**
 Hippodamia/Pythia.....**Lindsey Oetken**
 Shepherdess/Calaeus.....**Allyson Bryson**
 Pelops/Head Cook.....**Seth M. Honerman**
 Guard #1/Soldier.....**Sam Smith**
 Chrysippus/Hermes/Aglaos.....**Christian Tesch**
 Aerope.....**Isabella Fox**
 Sthenelus.....**Daniel Walker**
 Pelopia.....**McKenna Prill**
 Guard #2/Captain.....**Zac Gaulke**
 Servant/Orchomenus/Guard...**William Hallock**
 Servant/Aegisthus.....**Joaquin Warren**
 Pleisthenes/Servant.....**Jacob Haen**

SETTING

Ancient Greece
 1300 BCE

ATREUS IS AN ORIGINAL PRODUCTION,
 WRITTEN AND DIRECTED
 BY YAUREYBO JORDÁN
 2020

PRODUCTION STAFF

Yaureybo Jordán
 Director
Reina Beisell
 Production Stage Manager
Scott M. Anderson
 Scenic Design
Morgan Benson
 Costume Design
Jameson Bernhagen
 Lighting Design
Jason Wagaman
 Sound Design
Joshua Zeiste
 Technical Director
Sam Verdick
 Assistant Stage Manager
Rachel Reidburn
 Lightboard Operator
Ashley Himli
 Soundboard Operator
Ray L. Kloth
 Stagehand/Costume Crew
George Grubb
Heather Hamilton
 Faculty Advisors
Paige Johnson
 House Manager
Sam Verdick
 Original Poster Artwork

Fall 2020 & Spring 2021

ATREUS – Rehearsal Schedule

(Subject to change)

	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Week 10 OCT/ NOV	26 6:30-9:30pm ATREUS REHEARSAL BEGIN at Room 113 Table Work	27 BLOCKING Blocking A2:S1-S3	28 Blocking A2:S4-S5	29 Blocking Prologue & A1:S1-S3	30 Blocking A3:S1, S3 & S4	31 TBA	1 TBA
Week 11	2 <i>Begin costume build</i>	3 Blocking A4:S1-S3 & Epilogue	4 OFF BOOK Work Prologue & A1:S1-S3	5 Work A2:S1-S3	6 Work A2:S4-S5	7	8 Work A3:S1, S3 & S4
Week 12	9 Work A3:S2, S5 & S6	10 Work A4:S1-S3 & Epilogue	11 Run and Work Act 2	12 Run and Work Prologue & Act 1	13 Run and Work Act 3	14	15 TBA
Week 13	16 Rehearsal at Andrews Theatre Run and Work Act 4 & Epilogue	17 Run and Work Prologue, Act 1 & Act 2	18 Run and Work Act 3, Act 4 & Epilogue	19 RUN THRU -> Complete play	20 Run thru Complete play	21	22 TBA
Week 14	23 Run thru Complete play	24 Run thru Complete play	25 THANKSGIVING BREAK	26 THANKSGIVING BREAK	27 THANKSGIVING BREAK	28	29
Week 15 NOV /DEC	30 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	1 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	2 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	3 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	4 Zoom Rehearsal-TBA	5	6
Christmas Break... Happy Holidays!							
Week 1 JAN	11 Run thru Complete play	12 Run thru Complete play	13 Photo Call Act 3, Act 4 & Prologue Fight Call	14 7:00pm Fight call 7:30pm Run thru Complete play	15 7:00pm Fight call 7:30pm Run thru Complete play	16 7:00pm Fight call 7:30pm Run thru Complete play	17 6:30pm Fight call 6:40pm call-rest of cast 7:30pm Run thru Complete play 1 st Dress
Week 2	18 (No rehearsal) Martin Luther King Day	19 6:30pm Fight call 7:30PM STUDENT PREVIEW PERFORMANCE <i>Console Out/House cla</i>	20 6:30pm Fight call 7:30PM OPEN PERFORMANCE (25% capacity = 63 persons max)	21 6:30pm Fight call 7:30PM PERFORMANCE	22 6:30pm Fight call 7:30PM PERFORMANCE	23 1:00pm Fight call 2:00PM and 7:30PM PERFORMANCE	24 1:00pm Fight call 2:00PM LAST PERFORMANCE -close/strike

Rehearsal schedule

Characters by Scene

*{NL} Character who have no lines in the scene

#	Character	Prologue	A1S1	A1S2	A1S3	A2S1	A2S2	A2S3	A2S4	A2S5	A3S1	A3S2	A3S3	A3S4	A3S5	A3S6	A4S1	A4S2	A4S3	Epilogue
1	ATREUS	X	X (boy)	X (boy)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X
2	THYESTES		X (boy)	X (boy)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
3	HIPPODAMIA		X	X	X	X														
4	SYNEIDA		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			X						
5	PELOPS		X	X	X															
6	CHRYSIPPUS		X (NL)	X	X															
7	AEROPE					X		X	X	X		X			X					
8	GUARD #1						X		X	X										
9	GUARD #2						X		X	X										
10	STHELENUS						X		X	X										
11	SHEPHERDESS							X												
12	LAMBS (4)							X	X											
13	GOLDEN LAMB							X	X											
14	AGAMEMNON							X (voice)												
15	MENELAUS							X (voice)												
16	PLEISTHENES							X (voice)		X (boy/NL)	X									
17	HERMES									X										
18	CAPTAIN										X	X	X	X		X				
19	SOLDIER										X	X	X	X		X				
20	SERVANT #1										X									
21	PELOPIA											X			X	X				
22	AGLAUS											X	X							
23	ORCHOMENUS											X	X							
24	CALAEUS											X	X							
25	HEAD COOK													X (NL)						
26	SERVANT #2													X (NL)						
27	SERVANT #3													X (NL)						
28	PYTHIA														X					
29	AEGISTHUS															X (baby)	X	X	X	
30	GUARD #3																			

Characters by scene

APPENDX D

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

ALL PICTURES TAKEN BY CORRIE EGGIMANN AND VICTORIA K. FINGER



Ben Siglin as Atreus surrounded by the ancient gods



Seth Honerman as Pelops and Lindsey Oetken as Hippodamia



Christian Tesch as Chrysippus, Lindsey Oetken as Hippodamia,
and Ryan Feist as Thyestes



Ben Siglin as Atreus, Christian Tesch as Chrysippus,
Ryan Feist as Thyestes, and Lindsey Oetken as Hippodamia



Ben Siglin as Atreus, Christian Tesch as Chrysippus, and Ryan Feist as Thyestes



Seth Honerman as Pelops, Emma Anderson as Syneida,
Christian Tesch as Chrysippus, and Lindsey Oetken as Hippodamia



Ben Siglin as Atreus, Ryan Feist as Thyestes and Isabella Fox as Aerope



Zachary Gaulke as Guard #2, Ryan Feist as Thyestes, Daniel Walker as Sthenelus, Sam Smith as Guard #1, and Ben Siglin as Atreus



Ryan Feist as Thyestes and Isabella Fox as Aerope



Isabella Fox as Aeropoe, Ben Siglin as Atrous, and Allyson Bryson as Shepherdess



Zachary Gaulke as Guard #2, Ben Siglin as Atrous, Isabella Fox as Aeropoe, Sam Smith as Guard #1, and Emma Anderson as Syneida



Ben Siglin as Atreus, Zachary Gaulke as Guard #2, Isabella Fox as Aerope, Emma Anderson as Syneida, Ryan Feist as Thyestes, Sam Smith as Guard #1, and Daniel Walker as Sthenelus



Ben Siglin as Atreus, and Christian Tesch as Hermes



Ben Siglin as Atreus, Zachary Gaulke as Guard #2, Isabella Fox as Aerope, Daniel Walker as Sthenelus, Emma Anderson as Syneida, Ryan Feist as Thyestes, and Sam Smith as Guard #1



Zachary Gaulke as Guard #2, Emma Anderson as Syneida, Ben Siglin as Atreus, Daniel Walker as Sthenelus, Isabella Fox as Aerope, Sam Smith as Guard #1, and Ryan Feist as Thyestes



Zachary Gaulke as Captain, Ben Siglin as Atreus, Sam Smith as Soldier,
Jacob Haen as Pleisthenes and William Hallock as Servant #1



Ben Siglin as Atreus, and Jacob Haen as Pleisthenes



Christian Tesch as Aglaus, Allyson Bryson as Calaeus, Ben Siglin as Atreus,
Zachary Gaulke as Captain, Sam Smith as Soldier,
Ryan Feist as Thyestes, and William Hallock as Orchomenus



Ben Siglin as Atreus, and Ryan Feist as Thyestes



Ben Siglin as Atreus, and Emma Anderson as Syneida



Ryan Feist as Thyestes, Lindsey Oetken as Pythia, and McKenna Prill as Pelopia



McKenna Prill as Pelopia



Zachary Gaulke as Captain, and Sam Smith as Soldier



Joaquin Warren as Aegisthus, Ryan Feist as Thyestes,
Ben Siglin as Atreus, and William Hallock as Guard #3



Joaquin Warren as Aegisthus, and Ryan Feist as Thyestes



Ryan Feist as Thyestes, Ben Siglin as Atreus, and Joaquin Warren as Aegisthus



Ben Siglin as Atreus, Ryan Feist as Thyestes, and Joaquin Warren as Aegisthus



Jacob Haen, Daniel Walker, Christian Tesch, Sam Smith,
 Seth Honerman, Zackary Gaulke, Joaquin Warren, Emma Anderson, Ben Siglin,
 Ryan Feist, Isabella Fox, Lindsey Oetken,
 William Hallock, Yaureybo Jordán, Allyson Bryson, McKenna Prill,
 Sam Verdick, Rachel Reidburn, Reina Beisell, Ray Kloth, and Jameson Bernhagen



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